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ESSAYS ON REFORM.

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PREFACE.

THE writers of this collection of Essays have been drawn together by general similarity of opinions and by a common desire to contribute, each on the topic with which he happens to be most familiar, to the solution of the great problem which at present occupies the mind of the nation. But they are not otherwise responsible for the contents of each other's Essays, which most of them have not seen.

The present collection contains Essays bearing directly on the Reform of the House of Commons. It is hoped that its contents may help to show that the demand for a more national Parliament is not a mere cry to which it would be folly and weakness to give way, or the expedient of a party anxious to attain power by the aid of popular agitation, but a conviction seriously entertained and capable of being supported by arguments worthy of the attention of those who wish to legislate deliberately and in an impartial spirit for the good of the whole people.

It is commonly alleged that, though a more national Parliament might in itself be an improvement, no national questions can be pointed out, with which such a Parliament would deal better than they are dealt with under the present system. This allegation will be met by Essays on some great national questions, in which the attempt will be made to show that those questions might be more hopefully approached by a Government representing and carrying with it the whole nation. It was originally intended that both classes of Essays should be included in the same collection; but this has been found, both on account of the bulk and of the pressure of time, to be impracticable; and the Essays belonging to the latter class will therefore form a separate collection, which, it is hoped, will shortly issue from the press, under the title of "QUESTIONS FOR A REFORMED PARLIAMENT."

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ESSAYS ON REFORM.

I.

THE UTILITARIAN ARGUMENT AGAINST REFORM, AS STATED BY MR. LOWE.

BY GEORGE C. BRODRICK.

THERE lies on the very threshold of Parliamentary Reform a previous question which must be effectually cleared up before we can proceed further. It is the question whether, in discussing any measure, practical or prospective, for the extension of the franchise, we are at liberty to entertain considerations of justice at all, or whether our judgment is to be solely guided by considerations of expediency. For, if all our ideas of justice must indeed be dismissed as irrelevant; if a moral claim to representation is nothing but a metaphysical or sentimental abstraction, and neither virtue nor intelligence confers even a presumptive title to a share of political power; if the franchise is a privilege to be given or withheld by the existing legislature according to their own estimate of the use likely to be made of it, and if that estimate is to be formed with exclusive regard to the ends of good government, whatever those ends may be;—then it is manifest that most of what has been hitherto said and written on both sides of this great subject has

been said and written in vain There will still remain an essential difference between an adequate and an inadequate ideal of utility, a difference so broad and deep as to be almost co-extensive with that between utility and right; but the spirit, as well as the standard, of inquiry, will be purely utilitarian. Our language will have to be borrowed from political economy, rather than from ethics, and the controversy between the advocates and opponents of progressive enfranchisement must be conducted on the hypothesis that men have no rights but what the law gives them—an hypothesis upon which there is much to be said against constitutional government, and in favour of slavery itself.

It is perhaps needless to point out that such was exactly the ground occupied and defended with rare ability by Mr. Lowe in the debates of the two last sessions. The brilliant essays on constitutional government delivered by him, respectively, on the 3d of May, 1865, the 13th of March, the 26th of April, and the 3d of May, 1866, embody a perfect repertory of utilitarian objections to any downward extension of the suffrage. They were received with unbounded applause at the time by the Conservative party in the House of Commons and the country, and never were the doctrines of Benthamism more triumphantly applied to a political question than in these luminous speeches.[1] Though an almost superfluous amount of criticism has been lavished on their most vulnerable points, a very general impression still prevails that Mr. Lowe's main position never has been, and never can be, shaken—an

[1] These Speeches, with some Letters on the same subject, and a Preface by Mr. Lowe himself, have lately been republished in a volume, to which reference will be made in the following notes as "Speeches and Letters."

impression which sensibly weakens the cause of Reform, and which, therefore, it is high time, if possible, to remove.[1] We cannot afford to leave so redoubtable a fortress, untaken, in our rear. Should it appear that this famous argument—effective as it was, and exhaustive as it purported to be—consists of a fallacious deduction from premisses demonstrably unsound, involves an entire misconstruction of the views which it purports to expose, and leads to conclusions which its author himself would repudiate, we shall advance with more confidence to an examination of those practical views which it was designed to support.

What, then, are the fundamental propositions upon which Mr. Lowe builds his own reasoning? They are stated with sufficient precision in his speech against the Borough Franchise Bill of 1865, and in his two first speeches against the Government Reform Bill of 1866. "I take the liberty of putting aside the sentimental argument, simply observing that the single question is of good government."[2] "When we speak of a Reform Bill, when we speak of giving the franchise to a class which has it not—of transferring the electoral power from one place to another, we should always bear in mind that the end we ought to have in view is not the class which receives the franchise, not the district which obtains the power of sending members to Parliament, but that Parliament itself in which those members are to

[1] In a Speech delivered on February 25, 1867, Mr. Lowe himself expressed a fear that he had succeeded in convincing nobody. His success has been greater than he seems to be aware. He has convinced nobody that any party can hold office without conceding the principle of progressive enfranchisement, but he has convinced many people that progressive enfranchisement will be mischievous to the best interests of the country.

[2] Speech of May 3, 1865, Speeches and Letters, p. 39.

sit, and for the sake of constituting which properly those powers ought alone to be exercised. To consider the franchise as an end in itself—*to suppose that we should confer it on any one class of persons because we think them deserving,* that we should take it away from one place because it is small, or give it to another because it happens to be large, is, in my opinion, to mistake the means for the end."[1] . . . . "The second is a much humbler, but a much sounder doctrine, and that is, that the franchise, like every other political expedient, is a means to an end, that end being the preservation of order in the country, the keeping a just balance of classes, and the preventing any predominance or tyranny of one class over another."[2]

The general purport of these passages, amplified and illustrated as they were by their context, cannot be misunderstood. They not only represent the public good, in the sense therein explained, as the supreme end of legislation, but they proscribe the influence of any sentiments which have not a direct reference to that end.[3]

I. Here, then, is the first issue between Reformers and Mr. Lowe. Those who are acquainted with the philosophy of Bentham will not fail to recognise in this canon of political utility the radical defect of that ethical system which confounds the motive with the criterion of conduct, and assumes that because the moral value of actions may be determined by their ultimate tendencies, they should therefore be performed by the agent with the well-being of the human race consciously present to

[1] Speech of March 13, 1866, Speeches and Letters, p. 64.

[2] Speech of April 26, 1866, Ibid. p. 105.

[3] Full expositions of Mr. Lowe's theory will be found in Speeches and Letters, pp. 33—39, 84—85, 103—107, and in the Preface, pp. 3—6.

his mind. Nor is this a mere speculative heresy, when so interpreted as to make political deliberation a mere calculation of consequences; it vitally affects Mr. Lowe's whole argument against progressive enfranchisement. When he invites us to judge of a past measure, such as the Reform Bill of 1832, by its effects rather than by its conformity to any preconceived notions of justice, we cannot shrink from accepting the challenge; for utility, though far inferior to justice as a motive, is far superior to it as a test. The Reform Bill of 1832, therefore, must stand or fall by our experience of its results, and experience teaches us that, having been advocated on grounds of justice, and resisted on grounds of expediency, it has in fact produced very beneficial consequences which few even of its promoters foresaw. But the experience by which alone the Reform Bill of last session could be condemned has yet to be acquired. When we are invited to judge of a measure, not past but future, by results not ascertained but conjectured, or suggested by doubtful analogies, we may well demur to such a method of arbitrament. The adaptation of the utilitarian rule to prospective contingencies involves what logicians call a fallacy of time. Real facts are more trustworthy than the dictates of political justice; but the dictates of political justice, so far as they are warranted by our knowledge of human nature, and sanctioned by the reason and conscience of mankind, are more trustworthy than hypothetical facts.

We could not, then, consent to discuss the merits of a contemplated Reform Bill upon this basis, even if the conception of political utility proposed to us were ever so comprehensive. But Mr. Lowe, unlike Bentham, does

not include among the proper objects of legislation the satisfaction of the feelings and aspirations of the masses for whom Government exists, and ridicules the very notion of studying to "elevate"[1] them by the franchise. Sometimes he describes the aim which should guide the statesman in deliberating on Reform as "the happiness of the people at large;"[2] sometimes, as we have already seen, he virtually limits it to "the keeping a just balance of classes;"[3] sometimes he insists that it must be concentrated upon the composition of the House of Commons itself.[4] It matters little which of these principles we elect, for, as expounded by Mr. Lowe, they are all fatally defective, even from the utilitarian point of view. They all equally leave out of sight the popular will, an element upon which the success of any Government which does not rely on military force, must entirely depend. They all ignore the possible value of political education, if not as an end in itself, yet as a means of bringing the greatest possible amount of intelligence to bear on the common weal, and of increasing the sum of general happiness. They all exalt administration into the highest function of government, whereas it is the most essentially mechanical, and depends for its energy on that motive power which it is the characteristic virtue of *self-government* to supply effectively.

But each of them is also open to special exceptions. Before we adopt any idea so vague as "the happiness of the people at large," for an ultimate standard of representative institutions, we ought, according to Mr. Lowe's own rule, to ascertain, by the light of experi-

[1] Speeches and Letters, p. 37. [2] Ibid. p. 38. [3] Ibid. p. 105.
[4] Ibid. pp. 64, 86—95, and Preface, p. 6.

ence, whither it is likely to lead us. The answer of history is decisive. "The happiness of the people at large," is the familiar watchword of despotism. It is the despot, in every age and of every type, who professes to do everything for the people, though nothing by the people, and who cuts down the tree of liberty in his eagerness to obtain its fruits. The vice of despotic government, however paternal, and that which renders it as ruinous economically as it is morally degrading, consists not in its wilful neglect of popular interests, but in its contempt for popular opinions, in treating the people as passive materials for benevolent superintendence; and this vice must attach, more or less, to every government constituted with reference to the happiness only, and without reference to the voice, of the governed. Again, what can be more arbitrary than a hydrostatic theory of representation based on an equilibrium of classes? What is a "class" but a purely artificial aggregate, which may consist of hundreds, thousands, or millions, according to the fancy or design of its framer? To know what is a just balance of classes, we must have determined beforehand what degree of weight each ought to possess in the State, and have solved most of the problems which it is the special function of a reformed Parliament to investigate. Not long ago, it was considered a fair distribution of legislative power that a few hundred noblemen should not only compose one estate of the realm co-ordinate with the Commons, but should also exercise, through relations and nominees, a preponderating influence in the popular branch of the Legislature. No one now ventures to maintain such a paradox, but the self-interest which formerly made it credible has not ceased to

operate. What appears to a landlord or employer "a just balance of classes," may appear the very reverse to an impartial critic, as well as to a tenant or artizan, especially if it has been adjusted on the monstrous supposition that the more numerous a class is, the more jealously should it be excluded from the franchise. It is scarcely necessary to dwell on the suggestion that in supporting or rejecting a Reform Bill, we should be guided not by respect for the rights, or even for the interests, of those whom it would enfranchise, but only by its presumed effect on the constitution and character of the House of Commons. It would follow almost inevitably from this proposition that if nomination by the Crown would, in most cases, give us a better deliberative assembly than election by the people, it would be well to entrust the choice of members to Her Majesty. A committee thus selected might, indeed, be superior to the body returned by the present constituencies in all respects but one. It might, and perhaps would, contain more individual eminence, more public spirit, and more virtue, but it would not be representative. It might labour exclusively for the happiness of the people at large, it might devote itself to the preservation of order in the country, the keeping a just balance of classes, and the preventing any predominance or tyranny of one class over another; but, inasmuch as it would be a royal council and not a chamber of popular delegates, its legislation would be futile, and its maintenance impossible. Had the unreformed House of Commons been as enlightened as it was obstructive, it could not, for a similar reason, have been tolerated much longer. Men who have arrived at years of discretion will not submit

to leading-strings or to the guardianship of trustees chosen for them. It is highly important, no doubt, that Parliament should be as efficient as possible, but the paramount object, because the most essential condition, of its existence is, that it should duly reflect the will of the people.

The utilitarian argument against progressive enfranchisement is, therefore, self-refuting. It cannot be shown that good government, or the greatest happiness of the greatest number, as conceived by Bentham, would be consistent with a general sense of injustice among the people, an entire want of confidence in their rulers, a latent antagonism, or even a sullen indifference, to the policy which is carried out in their name, and at their expense. Yet unless this be shown, Mr. Lowe's case breaks down, by his own confession. The moment we entertain considerations of this kind, and consult the feelings of the unrepresented classes, we transgress the line which he traces so carefully, and admit, in some degree, those claims of morality and justice of which he never fails to speak with sovereign disdain.[1] Whether or not the claims of morality and justice may be reconciled with the doctrines of utility, is no longer the question; for Mr. Lowe admits no alternative between embracing the inferences drawn by himself from those doctrines, and taking our stand on the "*à priori* rights" of man.

[1] As, for instance, in the Speech of March 13, 1866, Speeches and Letters, p. 85 :—"Government does not deal with justice, it deals with expediency. The object is to construct the best machinery for the purpose to which it is to be applied. We may violate any law of symmetry, equality, or distributive justice, in providing the proper machinery to enable us to do what is required of us." So, again, in the Speech of April 26, 1866, Speeches and Letters, p. 131 :—"I simply deny that justice has anything to do with the matter; it is purely a question of State policy."

This charge, repeated so often, and in so many forms, during the debates of last Session,[1] deserves closer examination than it has received. We have seen that utilitarianism does not involve, or even sanction, the concessions which he requires us to make; we have next to inquire whether the rejection of utilitarianism involves the *reductio ad absurdum* to which he would drive us.

II. A more definite form may be given to this second issue, by a citation of the sentence, so persistently and so grossly misrepresented, in which Mr. Gladstone stated the moral, as opposed to the utilitarian, theory of representation: "I say that every man who is not presumably incapacitated by some consideration of *personal unfitness or political danger* is morally entitled to come within the pale of the Constitution."[2] In this proposition is defined—not, indeed, with scientific accuracy, but with accuracy enough for all purposes of fair controversy—

[1] Speech of May 3, 1865, Speeches and Letters, p. 35:—"And to what do the arguments of those who, like the Chancellor of the Exchequer, advocate the right of the working classes to be admitted to the exercise of the franchise, amount? To that assumption of the *à priori* rights of man which formed the terror and the ridicule of that grotesque tragedy the French Revolution. When the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that the *onus probandi* lay with his adversary, he *must have meant* that anterior to the existence of society there was vested in every man some personal *à priori* right which nobody had authority to touch. When Mr. Mill, in like manner, speaks of every citizen of a State having a perfect right to a share in its government, he appeals to some *à priori* considerations, in accordance with which every man would be entitled not only to be well governed, but to take part in governing himself." Statements to the same effect occur in the Speech of May 31, 1866, Speeches and Letters, p. 174; and in the very first page of the Preface.

[2] Speech on Mr. Baines' Borough Franchise Bill of 1864. Compare with this statement the unqualified assertion of human equality in the American Declaration of Independence, adopted in Congress July 24th, 1776:—"We hold these truths to be self-evident—that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," &c.

the principle of progressive enfranchisement. That principle, like all others, rests on certain presumptions, is subject, in its application, to certain conditions, and appeals for its verification to the evidence of experience. The presumptions on which it rests are such as the equality of all citizens before the law,[1] and the possible existence of political rights which have not yet acquired a legal sanction. The conditions of its application are those specified by Mr. Gladstone—that the claimant of the franchise must be personally competent to exercise it, and that his enfranchisement would not involve any political danger.[2] The experience to which it appeals for its verification is that which teaches us, for instance, that men, for the most part, understand and manage their own affairs better than others who have counter-interests to serve—that men pay taxes and obey laws more loyally when they have taken part in voting the former and making the latter—and that men who are denied the privileges are apt to forget the duties of citizenship.[3]

It would be too much to expect that any generalizations from experience, founded as they must be on

[1] That is, that one citizen's interests are of equal concern to the State with those of any other citizen, not that one citizen is equally qualified with any other to exercise political power. It might appear needless to indicate this distinction, but that it is habitually overlooked by Mr. Lowe, as in page 5 of the Preface to Speeches and Letters.

[2] Mr. Lowe must entirely have forgotten this most important qualification when he directly accused Mr. Gladstone of maintaining "that the franchise is due to every one whom you cannot show to be unfit."—Speeches and Letters, p. 131.

[3] These are but a few out of many similar lessons derived from experience. The mention of them is, however, sufficient to rebut Mr. Lowe's bold assertion, that the arguments in favour of what he calls "Democracy" are "mostly metaphysical, resting on considerations prior to, and therefore independent of, experience."—Preface to Speeches and Letters, p. 3.

a limited induction, should command an unreserved assent from a political adversary. Still less are we entitled to demand that Mr. Gladstone's statement of the conditions upon which political rights should be granted, or his opinion that these conditions have been fulfilled by a considerable proportion of our own working classes, should be accepted, even provisionally. Upon this part of the field it was reasonable and inevitable that every inch of ground should be hotly contested. But Mr. Lowe thought to secure a more decisive victory by turning the enemy's position. He must needs fasten a belief in *à priori* rights upon all who support the moral argument for progressive enfranchisement, and defy them to maintain those rights in debate. When he declared "that the arguments of those who advocate the right of the working classes to be admitted to the exercise of the franchise amount to that assumption of the *à priori* rights of man, which formed the terror and the ridicule of that grotesque tragedy, the French Revolution," he must obviously have meant one of two things—either that, in fact, that right has been generally advocated on that assumption, or that, logically, it can be defended on no other assumption. It would be difficult to decide which allegation is the more groundless. To dispute the former, would be a mere waste of time, until a single passage, affirming or implying the *à priori* right of man to the franchise, can be produced from the works or speeches of any living Reformer. The latter is, happily, capable of exposure without the necessity of proving a negative. If it were impossible to conceive of any right prior to law, yet not absolute, but relative—not inherent, but derivative—not indefeasible

or unconditional, but dependent on other rights no less sacred—then, and then only, could Mr. Lowe be justified in gratuitously identifying the moral rights which Mr. Gladstone alleges with those *à priori* rights which he himself derides. On the contrary, not only is it possible to conceive of moral rights varying in character and degree with social progress, but many such are recognised by jurists of every school,[1] as well as in popular language. Of the privileges and securities to which the name of "rights" has been given, a very few—such as the right of personal liberty, and the right of self-defence—have been designated, perhaps not very philosophically, rights of nature. Others are known as legal rights; and this class includes and contains so large a proportion of moral rights in a well-governed country, that it is seldom necessary to look beyond them, except for purposes of legislation. For these purposes, however, it is quite essential that we should realize the existence of rights, both civil and political, distinct from so-called natural rights, and paramount to legal rights, which may properly be termed moral rights. Among the civil rights of this class is that of every citizen to protection from the State; among the political rights of this class is that of every nation, in an United Kingdom like our own, to a share in the Imperial Government. Not even Mr. Lowe would deny that every British subject is "morally entitled" to be protected, or (which is the same thing in other words) that the State is morally bound to protect

[1] Bentham himself fully recognises rights of this kind, though he prefers to describe them as ends, or objects, of legislation. One of these ends being equality, and another security, in the possession of property, he tells us explicitly that where these two principles conflict, "equality *ought* to give way." —Dumont's Bentham, Principes du Code Civil, part i. ch. xi.

him against violence or aggression, whether or not our present laws are effectual to that end. Not even Mr. Lowe would venture to dispute the moral claim of Ireland to come within the pale of the Constitution, if she had no representatives in the Legislature. Then why should he protest that a similar claim on behalf of an unrepresented class cannot be entertained without acknowledging the *à priori* rights of man? Let him deny, if he will, the existence of any rights but legal rights,[1] and brave, if he dare, the consequences of pushing the utilitarian creed to extremes; but let him not practise on the English dread of *à priori* rights, to frighten less acute reasoners into embracing it.

There may, therefore, be such a thing as a moral claim of non-electors to the franchise; it remains to consider how its validity, in any given case, is to be determined. This question really involves no abstruse metaphysical inquiry into the origin of rights. The origin of rights is one thing; their validity is another. The former depends on the authority which is supposed to sanction them; the latter depends on the *forum* in which they are pleaded. The right of personal liberty itself is not valid, though doubtless it ought to be, in countries where slavery is part of the social system. The right of a man to the fruit of his own labour would not be valid in a community where all property was held in common. Hardly any moral rights to political privileges are valid

[1] Mr. Lowe would probably not shrink from accepting this challenge, if we may judge by the following passage:—"Thus the words 'right' and 'justice' have a perfectly clear and defined meaning when applied to the administration of justice under a settled law, but are really without meaning, except as vague and inappropriate metaphors, when applied to the distribution of political power."—Preface to Speeches and Letters, p. 5.

in Russia, not only because such privileges are not in harmony with established Russian institutions, but also because the people have not yet acquired the habits and ideas to which they correspond. None but legal rights are valid in any court of law; and of legal rights, those called equitable are not valid in our courts of common law. What rights, then, may be pleaded as valid in the English Parliament? All those, and only those, which can be warranted by principles already consecrated by a general consensus of the legislature and the nation. The ultimate appeal is to the public conscience—to that code of political morality which, however formed, tacitly governs the course of legislation, and has found an imperfect expression in certain great constitutional maxims. To assert that every duly-qualified citizen is morally entitled to come within the pale of the Constitution, unless it would be dangerous to admit him, is merely to assert that his admission would be in accordance with some article of this code, while his exclusion violates it. Let it be supposed, for the sake of argument, that one of these received maxims, sound or unsound, is that representation should be proportioned, at least approximately, to taxation. If, then, it could be shown that a large share of the national burdens is borne by the excluded class, their moral right to a large share of representation would be, *primâ facie*, established. Suppose, again, that another maxim, approved by the moral sense of the nation at large, affirms that legislative power in a representative government is derived from the consent of the whole people, expressed or implied. If, then, it should be proved that a numerous and increasing section of the excluded class is no longer content with the position

assigned to it, openly claims the franchise, and threatens to withdraw its consent to the state of tutelage in which it has so long acquiesced, this circumstance would, so far, greatly enhance the moral right in question. But we may go further. All existing qualifications are grounded on a similar assumption that a certain degree of wealth or education constitutes, not an *à priori* right, but a "moral right" to representation. To impugn the moral right of an unrepresented class, however strong its credentials, is to impugn the moral right of the present electoral body, and to justify the former in believing that nothing but the law stands between itself and its enfranchisement. This is what is meant when the franchise is described as "a debt" due to the working classes, or as a "reward" earned by their virtues. Such expressions are obviously metaphorical, but not more so than a "balance" of classes. Phrases which represent the franchise as a mechanical instrument, or a chemical ingredient, for the production of a predetermined result, are quite as capricious, quite as indefinite, and quite as likely to convey a false impression, as those which Mr. Lowe so unjustly disparages. The difference is, that material illustrations are far beneath moral illustrations in the dignity of the sentiments which they suggest.

III. Having thus examined the reasons for discarding motives of justice, and abandoning ourselves to motives of expediency, in the distribution of legislative power, we find them wholly untenable. The utilitarian argument, as developed by Mr. Lowe, is in effect an argument against the first principles of political liberty; the moral argument, as limited by Mr. Gladstone, is defensible on every ground consistent with those principles. Were the

antagonism between the apparent interests of the nation and the legitimate claims of our fellow-citizens as direct as Mr. Lowe conceives it to be, we should require stronger proofs than he has adduced to justify us in absolutely sacrificing the latter to the former. Happily, we are placed in no such dilemma. The statesman, though actuated by a sense of justice, and not deaf to the plea of moral right, will not therefore shut his eyes to consequences. He will admit, with Mr. Gladstone, that "political danger," if real and urgent, may render, not the rejection, but the postponement, of demands otherwise irresistible, a duty no less than a necessity. If, then, Mr. Lowe can make good his contention upon this third issue—*if* he can show that a moderate reduction of the franchise, such as was proposed by the Government last Session, would entail real and urgent political danger —we may still be compelled, while denying his premisses, to accept his practical conclusion.

It must be confessed that no pains have been spared by Mr. Lowe to make this side of his position impregnable. He has ransacked history, and laid under contribution all contemporary experience, in the attempt to demonstrate that it would be an act of downright suicide, and little short of treason, for Parliament to admit but one-tenth of the unrepresented class within the pale of the Constitution. But what is the process whereby he professes to have achieved the demonstration of this astounding paradox? It may be described in a single sentence. He lays it down as a postulate that such a measure would be "a step in the direction of Democracy;" and he constructs a hideous ideal of Democracy, by combining all the worst features of ancient city-

governments with all the worst features of modern republics and empires in which universal suffrage prevails.[1] It is not a more or less popular representative government, but this Democracy, which is tyrannical at home and aggressive abroad, the enemy of all superiority, and the slave of every selfish prejudice. It is Democracy which prostitutes itself to the arts of demagogues and the bribes of millionaires, which makes the ignorant majority omnipotent, and teaches them to use terrorism, in the last resort, to silence and crush the educated minority. It is Democracy which concentrates all power in committees of the legislature, which paralyses the executive power, which dwarfs statesmanship, and which cannot even tolerate the independence of the judicial bench.

Now, supposing this to be no caricature of Democracy, or the government of the few by the many, and supposing also (which is surely a supposition no less violent) that an equally revolting picture of Oligarchy, or the government of the many by the few, could not be produced by a similar method, it still remains to be proved that a reduction of the borough franchise from 10*l.* to 7*l.* would conduct us to these dismal results. At first sight, it would appear that a measure which leaves the prerogatives of the Crown unimpaired, the House of Lords in possession of a legislative power vastly multiplied by social influence, and the great majority of the people still unrepresented, falls very far short of establishing a Democracy. To bridge over this logical chasm, however, Mr. Lowe again has recourse to mechanical imagery. Once quit the safe level of a 10*l.* franchise, and we are launched,

[1] See, especially, the Speech of April 26, 1866, Speeches and Letters, pp. 145—166.

according to him, on an inclined plane, whose ever-steepening gradients will hurry us forward helplessly with increasing velocity, till we plunge into the Democratic abyss. On that treacherous slope he assures us that no courage or skill will avail to stop us, for "the thing is fated," and the power of resistance, on which he now relies, will have passed away for ever.[1]

By the judicious employment of metaphors like these, rather than by any analysis of facts, Mr. Lowe succeeded in convincing no small proportion of the House of Commons that in giving up the 10*l.* franchise they would be resigning themselves to Democracy. We have now to consider, in a calmer mood, whether the conviction thus produced will bear the test of a retrospective scrutiny.

In the first place, we may well ask what is the evidence, and what the source, of this mysterious law, beyond the control of future Legislatures, which makes it impossible to go so far as may seem desirable without going further. We might be tempted to suspect that Mr. Lowe borrowed the idea of it from M. de Tocqueville, a writer to whom his obligations have been greater than is generally known. But Mr. Lowe himself emphatically repudiates the fatalism, which he imputes to M. de Tocqueville. "M. de Tocqueville assumed that Democracy was inevitable, and that the question to be considered was, not whether it was good or evil in itself, but how we could best adapt ourselves to it. This is *ignava ratio*, the coward's argument, by which I hope this House will not be influenced. If this Democracy be a good thing, let us clasp it to our bosoms: if not,

[1] Speeches and Letters, pp. 50—52, 140, 200, 201. Pref., p. 13. Speech of February 25, 1867.

there is, I am sure, spirit and feeling enough in this country to prevent us from allowing ourselves to be overawed by any vague presage of this kind, in the belief that the matter has been already decided upon by the fates and destinies in some dark tribunal in which they sit together to regulate the future of nations." It is quite true that M. de Tocqueville regarded Democracy, in his own sense, as inevitable; not, however, because the fates had so decreed it, but for the far better reason that civilized society, as he supposed, was deliberately moulding itself into the democratic type. Mr. Lowe's view differs from M. de Tocqueville's chiefly in this respect—that he thinks it possible to check the democratic spirit of the age, and so to thwart destiny, by standing still now, though impossible if the downward impetus be once given.[1] Which is the more philosophical of the two must be a matter of opinion, but Mr. Lowe's is certainly not the more statesmanlike. If it is absurd to do what appears to us wrong, in deference to political necessity, it is surely not less absurd to abstain from doing what appears to us right, because we anticipate that it will place our posterity at the mercy of the same political necessity.

[1] Mr. Lowe would have done more justice to M. de Tocqueville, whose opinion as to the effect of meddling with the electoral qualification he quotes so emphatically (Pref. to Speeches and Letters, p. 13), if he had referred to some passages of a different tenor in the works of the same author. Such are those in which M. de Tocqueville contends that, while all the faults of democracy are patent, many of its virtues are latent; that, in these days, the most effectual, if not the only, means of reviving public spirit, is to associate the whole people in the government; that, in America, the dominant majority consists, for the most part, of peaceable and patriotic citizens; and that, in England, liberal as our aristocracy is, the good of the poor has been constantly sacrificed to that of the rich.—Democratie en Amérique (Bruxelles, 1837), vol. ii. ch. 1 and 6.

At all events, such a warning comes more than thirty years too late. It was the Reform Bill of 1832 that commenced the fatal descent towards Democracy by extinguishing the old customary franchises of boroughs, and substituting the 10*l.* household suffrage, which is the object of Mr. Lowe's unqualified respect. The danger of yielding to democratic tendencies might then be urged, and was actually urged, with great effect; it has now ceased to have any meaning. Finality was justly exploded within a very few years after that memorable settlement, and everyone now acknowledges that each successive generation has the sole right, as it assuredly has the sole power, of discharging the responsibilities which devolve upon it.

Let us, then, shake off the notion that we can be a Providence to those who come after us, and we shall find less difficulty in reducing the shadowy outline of "Democracy" to its true proportions. What is "Democracy," after all? It is an ambiguous term, which sometimes denotes a certain form of Government, and sometimes a certain state of society. A democratic form of Government may exist, as in the Southern States of America, where the state of society is essentially aristocratic; a democratic state of society may exist, as in France since the Revolution, where the form of Government is oligarchical or despotic; but in either case there will be a perilous want of cohesion in the community. A clear perception of this distinction will be of great service in laying the ugly spectre conjured up by Mr. Lowe. No one can fail to see that in England, as elsewhere, there is a tendency towards what De Tocqueville calls an equality of social conditions. This tendency, though no more inevitable than any other

moral phenomenon, is one which a legislator must accept as a fact, because it is almost independent of legislation. The real question is, whether our representative system should be from time to time adjusted by the growing requirements of our social development, or should be employed as a barrier to retard its progress. Considering how frail such barriers must be, against the giant forces daily struggling to undermine them, the question surely answers itself. The nation, speaking and acting through the national Legislature, cannot safely treat Democracy as something outside itself, or retain a form of Government more aristocratic than is consistent with the social framework on which it is built. Those who deplore the spread of democratic sentiments and habits must combat them, as they would combat religious error, by the influences of literature and personal example. To combat them by upholding political institutions which society has outgrown, is to create one of those fatal disruptions in the body politic which bring about revolutions.

The further question whether progressive enfranchisement, apart from its being "a step towards Democracy," involves greater evils than it purports to remedy, is beyond the scope of our present subject. That a Reformer's sense of justice must be tempered with prudence has already been conceded. That prudence counsels a postponement of Reform cannot be conceded for a moment. It cannot be taken for granted that the great mass of our countrymen are hostile to our Constitution, nor, upon that supposition, is it by any means obvious that its defence would be weakened by subtracting a portion of the besieging force and adding it to the garrison. As we cannot expel from our population those

elements which form the strength of Trades Unions, it may well be less dangerous to incorporate them in our representative system than to leave them outside it. These and similar considerations are quite sufficient, if not to shift the burden of proof from the advocates to the opponents of progressive enfranchisement, yet at least to neutralize any Conservative presumption adverse to it.

Were it necessary to reinforce them by the exposure of inconsistencies in the practical objections urged against it, ample materials could be found in the speeches of Mr. Lowe himself. It was he who, after protesting that a measure enfranchising a few hundred thousand artizans would disturb the balance of classes and inaugurate the reign of Democracy, strove elaborately to prove that a much larger number might acquire the franchise now, if they would but practise a little self-denial.[1] It was he who, after foreshadowing the selfish and unscrupulous tyranny of numbers, attributed to the working classes, almost in the same breath, an entire indifference to the success of a measure which he described as an approach to that very consummation.[2] It was he who, endorsing the transparent fallacy that property, with all the countervailing advantages at its command, would be "swamped," and even "disfranchised," by its possessors being placed in a minority, nevertheless pointed, again and again, to the ascendancy of millionaires as one of the worst consequences to ensue from an extension of the suffrage.[3]

It is not, however, by such inconsistencies as these that the incurable weakness of Mr. Lowe's argument is

[1] Speeches and Letters, p. 46—49. [2] Ibid. p. 81.
[3] As, for instance, Speeches and Letters, pp. 80, 196, 210, 211.

to be measured. It is to be measured by the imperfect ideal of political utility which he presents to us, by the distorted conception of moral right which he contrasts with it and offers as the only alternative to it, by his failure to appreciate the essential harmony of the two principles when correctly applied, and by his confused apprehensions of a coming "Democracy" now or never to be averted. Since the superstructure cannot be stronger than its foundation, the policy which rests on arguments so erroneous must be rejected with it. It is well for the country that it has already been rejected by the House of Commons itself. We may admire these speeches as brilliant efforts of Parliamentary eloquence, we may profit by the many lessons of political wisdom contained in them, we may even prize them as contributions of great value to the history and literature of Reform, but no such feelings can be allowed to obscure or silence our conviction that counsels more delusive or more dangerous were never submitted, at a most critical juncture, to a deliberative assembly.

For these counsels are deeply imbued with that exclusive spirit, the very soul of oligarchical statecraft, which has so often proved the ruin, not of governments only, but of nations. The vitality of all political organisms is in proportion to their capacity of adaptation to altered conditions of existence. It was because their philosophers were ignorant of this secret, and their statesmen could not rise above the traditions of a glorious past to the idea of Panhellenic unity, that the Greek Republics, which had defied Persia in arms, and still maintained a peerless supremacy in all the arts of civilization, fell helplessly before Macedonia and Rome. It was because

her emperors were not possessed by truly imperial views, and invoked too late the life-giving virtues of self-government, that Rome herself, unable to assimilate the vast populations which she had conquered, and unequal to the exigencies of that "ampler day" then dawning upon Europe, was at last weighed in the balances and found wanting. History in every page, down to the very latest, records the same testimony for the warning alike of conquering races and of governing classes. It is not degeneracy, moral or physical, that directly causes the fall of empires and the decay of institutions, but the consequent failure of that insight into the present and that foresight of the future which inspired their original founders. If the stability of our own Constitution has been the marvel of modern times, it is chiefly because it has grown with the growth, strengthened with the strength, and expanded with the expansive energies of the English people. Let it once be stereotyped into a permanent form, and prove itself incapable of further development, and it will lose that which is the essential principle of its life. We are now entering, with the rest of Europe, consciously or unconsciously, upon a new order of things—an order of things in which, come what may, Labour must henceforth occupy a far higher position than heretofore. Not to recognize the rise of this irresistible power by a timely extension of our representative system, is to break the spell which has preserved its identity through the vicissitudes of six centuries; and, with it, to imperil the destiny of constitutional government.

II.

THE POLITICAL CHARACTER OF THE WORKING CLASS.

BY R. H. HUTTON.

A GREAT deal has been said and written, much of it no doubt, not unjustly though one-sidedly, on the unfitnesses of the working class for holding the balance of political power in the State. If they are,—those of them at least whom it is now proposed to admit to the franchise, the artisans of the towns,—on the whole superior in intelligence to the numerous class of small shopkeepers immediately above them, they are no doubt less thrifty, less disposed to be guided by those who are their superiors in culture, less cautious in their political instincts, less attached to the political institutions under which they live. This coldness of feeling towards our present political *régime* proceeds in fact from what is strongest and most manly in their character. The class immediately above them, admire rank as rank, and wealth as wealth; there is nothing which the majority of them covet more than an alliance with rank and wealth; there is no form which their ambition is more apt to take, than

a wish to secure for themselves the favourable recognition of rank and wealth, by a devotion almost servile to the political leadership of the wealthy and the noble. The most active and enterprising section of the working-classes, on the other hand, feel no sympathy at all with this spirit. They are more inclined to the opposite political danger: and sometimes distrust men really worthy of their confidence, *because* they belong to the aristocracy of rank, wealth, or even culture. There is therefore, I think, some show of reason for the greater anxiety which is felt by Conservatives at the step they are now asked to take, than was felt by the Conservatives of the last generation at the step, in many respects far more important, which was taken in 1832. But there are, on the other hand, many very important characteristics of the working class which are scarcely sufficiently considered in calculating the probable results of this change. And I believe that, in the long run, these characteristics will be far more important than the more immediate and more superficially obvious tendencies which are now filling the minds of timid people with the most extravagant apprehensions. For while the reactionary feeling against the classes now in possession of power will probably not long outlive the monopoly which has given rise to it, the other characteristics to which I wish to draw attention in this paper, are likely to grow with the growth of the working-class and strengthen with its strength.

In the first place, though I readily admit that the working class have nothing like the same caution and self-distrustfulness of judgment as the class immediately above them; and also, that they have not the same

breadth of judgment—the same susceptibility to a great *variety* of intellectual considerations—as the professional classes of England; yet I doubt if any class in England is at once so open to the influence of a few *great* ideas, and so willing to make sacrifices for those ideas. The aristocracy, as a class, are only in rare cases susceptible to the influence of disinterested political ideas; the great territorial interest, which is concentrated in them, dominates them, and makes them consider almost every question in the light of that interest alone. The same may be said of the next most important class in the English nation,—the commercial class. With respect to all wars, except Oriental[1] wars, the commercial class is apt to see nothing but the considerations, often no doubt very weak, though often, not always, quite paramount considerations, which should induce us to remain at peace ourselves, and try to keep others at peace. The territorial aristocracy sometimes supports the action of the mercantile class, as in the case of the Italian War of 1859, from which it expected nothing but a stimulus to French ambition, and, consequently, a menace to English power;—and sometimes, again, resists it; as in the case of the Dano-German War of 1864, when the aristocracy deemed English honour, and territorial interests—of both of which they consider themselves the sole interpreters and the natural guardians—endangered at once by the ambition of Germany, and by the peril to a small maritime power. But neither the territorial class nor the mercantile class is in the habit of examining political questions by the single light of any great moral

[1] Oriental wars have been generally undertaken at the instance, or for the sake of the commercial class.

principle. With them the special interest almost always predominates over all other considerations. It is different, no doubt, with the professional and literary class. Their minds are open, and open at every pore, at least to all intellectual considerations, without subservience to any overriding interest—which, indeed, in their case scarcely exists. But then they are almost *too* porous, *too* open to such influences, to discriminate sufficiently between the great ideas and the small. The line they took in the recent American Civil War illustrates this. It was not sympathy with an aristocracy, *quâ* aristocracy, which governed them, as it governed a large part of the country party, and of the House of Lords. Still less did they share the mere mercantile terror, which cried, "For God's sake don't offend our best customers, and the power that is certain to win by mere weight of wealth, the Northern States." But the professional men of our educated middle class, though they looked impartially at all considerations, showed no strong perception of the moral *proportion* between them. They protested against judging of any question by "simple issues." They perplexed themselves with refined constitutional considerations, with considerations of the balance of power and so forth. They piqued themselves on their impartiality, and on seeing "a great deal on both sides," and, on the whole, contributed very little—less, probably, in *consequence* of their culture than they would have done without it,—to influence the policy of England on that great matter. On the other hand the working class, though they had a far deeper *interest* in the matter than the professional classes, and that an interest opposed to the line of policy they advocated, saw but one great idea

involved in the struggle,—that of freedom contending with slavery: and this decided them. Their want of culture stood them in good stead. It acted as a sieve to prevent any smaller considerations permanently influencing their minds; so that they were swayed only by what literary men characterised as "much too simple issues." They saw the one great issue, and left out of consideration all the comparatively unimportant issues, to which our professional classes attached such undue weight. They were ruled by an idea—a great idea—a most disinterested idea, for it induced them to make immense sacrifices, and to acquiesce in want as the price of a triumph for that idea; and, consequently, they were able to throw their whole weight, which under the peculiar circumstances happened, in spite of their not being represented, to be a very great moral weight, into the right scale. We kept at peace for an idea, instead of "going to war for an idea;" and this was in a very large measure indeed the doing of the working class. Now surely there is a very great advantage in having a class politically strong in Parliament, which is thus unable to attach an unreal intellectual value to the smaller political ideas, and unembarrassed by that subtlety of mind, which makes better educated men dwell on a multitude of small considerations, till the great considerations are lost sight of altogether.

The working class showed the same sort of rough power again in discriminating Garibaldi as the true popular representative of Italian unity, and combining to do him honour. It is probable that, had they been fully represented in Parliament in 1859, we should not have hesitated to join France in recovering Italy for

the Italians. And in that case, we should at the present moment have far greater weight in Europe, and have saved Italy from that weight of obligation to France, which drew from her the cession of Savoy and Nice. No doubt the same generous openness to great political ideas would have inclined the working class to plunge England into a struggle for Poland, which, even with France as an ally, would probably have been hopeless and disastrous. And I am most ready to acknowledge, that there are cases in which this paramount influence of a great idea over the artisan class, and the absence from their minds of a sufficient regard for the difficulty or cost of a policy, and for other considerations of the same character, would lead them into political blunders. Still I cannot but think, that we have in the influence of the territorial and mercantile classes, which (even with the most extended franchise) must always be very powerful in Parliament, an ample guarantee against any excessive mobility to ideal or romantic considerations of a dangerous kind, and that we need, more than it is easy to express, the influence of a class in the state, open to great ideas, but unsophisticated enough not to be moved by small and subtle influences. In the intellectual culture of the country, there is often a want of proportion, a failure in discerning the enormous difference between the moral principles and more conspicuous and powerful ideas which permanently affect the destiny of nations, and those inferior considerations which should affect only their temporary policy. A great class, eminently alive to the former ideas, and somewhat obtuse to the latter, swayed by the great tides and oceanic currents which influence the masses, unconscious of the finer influences which

occupy (sometimes too exclusively) the minds of statesmen, will enable Parliament to keep in mind the comparative importance of different classes of political ideas far more clearly than it does at present.

In speaking of the special openness of the artisan class to *great* disinterested ideas, I have already implied, what is, I believe, true, that, in proportion to its knowledge, it is far more cosmopolitan in its sympathies than any class now represented in Parliament: I need not say, of course, far more cosmopolitan than agricultural labourers, who exaggerate, from their ignorance, the wholesome but narrow nationalism of the great landowners. It is true that commerce, once enlightened as to the principles of free-trade, has thrown all its influence into the scale of peace and amity with other nations. But "enlightened self-interest" is only cosmopolitan up to a certain point. It deprecates even a just and necessary war on account of the blow to trade. Thus, though the commercial classes deprecated all offence to the North in the American War, they never heartily sympathised with either party, and they were disposed to attach a ridiculous and wholly erroneous importance to the tariff questions with which the quarrel was complicated. Again, they deprecated the Italian War in 1859, and the Prusso-Italian War of last year in the same one-sided spirit. The mercantile classes are cosmopolitan only in defence of universal trade. The artisan class, on the other hand, is probably almost the only one in England, which might be trusted to judge English policy abroad almost as impartially as it would judge American, French, or German policy, and to hold back its sympathy even after we had engaged in a struggle, if the policy of

England seemed to be selfish and wrong. This is partly due, no doubt, to their grudge against institutions which have not yet admitted them to their proper share of influence, and we may well hope that all the undue parade of cosmopolitanism, all the tendency to that excessive candour which rather *likes* to find England in the wrong, will give way before the new pride which they will feel in their influence over the national government of the future. But I think that the artisan class, even after its great and important share in the collective life of the nation has been fairly recognised, will always retain a livelier sympathy with the popular feelings and the life of other nations than the classes now most influential in politics,—a sympathy which will prove to be of the greatest possible use in rectifying the excessive self-esteem of our territorial classes, and the equally excessive commercialism of our mercantile classes. The artisan is least of all Englishmen identified with the accumulations of past wealth,—with *visible objects* for the loss of which he fears,—with resources that can only return their full profit if they are carefully cherished for a long time in the same place. These are the roots of excessive national Conservatism, of an undue appreciation of those insulated local interests which are liable to suffer by the shock of foreign collisions and alarms. The artisan, on the contrary, carries his own wealth in the shape of skill with him; and it is not even, like the lawyer's or the surgeon's skill, of a kind which depends upon an extensive local connexion for its exercise. If he does not succeed in the south one year, he may succeed in the north the next. If he does not prosper in England this year, he may prosper next year in the United States or Canada

or Australia, or even, if he can master the difficulties of language, in France or Belgium. This is a condition of things which tends to liberate him from the more selfish prejudices of place and time, no doubt at the cost of much which can be gained only by striking deep local roots, but still which carries the great benefit with it of opening the sympathies more readily to the deep popular feelings of every nation. I venture to say that whoever remembers the unmanly English panic of 1859, the exclusively English point of view from which the upper and middle classes beheld Napoleon III.'s Italian expedition and anticipated the commencement of an European war such as his uncle had commenced by a step (in its superficial and geographical aspects) somewhat similar, will admit that at that time Parliament very much needed what the fair representation of the working class would have given it,—a certain scorn for the selfishly English point of view, for the anxious and angry "What will become of us if this goes on?" which was echoed about amongst us, while liberty and national life for the great Italian nation still hung in the balance. Doubtless the artisans have less to lose, have, at least individually much less to lose, and are therefore less liable to be imaginatively upset by a disturbance of European order, than our wealthier classes and our aristocracy. But for this very reason they are more at liberty to judge the popular movements of Europe without a perpetually haunting *arrière pensée* as to the reflex effect European events may have over what is exclusively English. They had no desire that the Italians should throw away their best hopes for the future, in order that we might not have to dread the possible fatalities attending

Napoleon's rising star. And it is my conviction that they will introduce a very needful infusion of cosmopolitan sympathy with other nations into our politics, without making us in any noble or useful sense less English, or less national than we now are. That a cosmopolitan element is wanted in English politics, no tranquil observer, I think, will deny.

But the most important of all the characteristic influences which may be anticipated from the representation of the artisan class, is the introduction into our national politics of those large, and, however much misapplied, still radically true and noble ideas of the claims of the organized whole over the individuals that constitute it, which the artisan class have worked out at the expense of so much sacrifice, and too often, no doubt, at the expense of true freedom, in their Trade Societies. We have hitherto looked upon these Trade Societies far too much as mere instruments of war with the class of employers. This of course they have been, and not unfrequently of very disastrous war. But they have been much more than this. They have been great voluntary organizations of extraordinary vigour, indicating a sense of the value of organization, and a distrust of mere scattered individual energies. They indicate such an appreciation of the value of true government as is found in no other class. They are all of them, of course, mutual insurance societies, by the help of which individual destitution has been aided out of the general fund, and the pressure of special calamities on individual places greatly mitigated. They have promoted the circulation of labour, and supported men whose services were not wanted in one place while they were in search of another where they were wanted. In

short, they have operated to mitigate the extremes both of prosperity and want, and to secure a more uniform level, or, at least, a less abrupt and painful variation of level, in the condition of the various branches of the artisan class. Whatever may be justly said of the misapplication of these great organizations, no one who knows anything about them can be blind to the great political qualities to which they bear witness,—the power of sustained sacrifice for a common purpose, the fortitude in suffering, the self-denial in prosperity, the nobleness of individual self-devotion for the common cause,—in fact, precisely those qualities which, when they are exhibited for that wider organization called a nation, we think worthy of the panegyric which in all ages of the world patriots have received. When these same qualities are exhibited on behalf of a body of working bookbinders or amalgamated engineers, they naturally do not earn the same high praise as when exhibited by Tyrolese in defence of their country. Nor *is* the motive so noble. Yet, though proceeding from a poorer motive, they show a political discipline and a respect for collective life, a conviction on the part of the individual that the body is greater than its members, and needs their service, sometimes even their sacrifice, such as is the more remarkable by reason of the less stimulating motive which is found sufficient to hold together these organizations. What I think may fairly be hoped for, is the diversion of some of this high *esprit de corps* from the narrow organization of the Trade Society into the wider organization of the nation. There is plenty of room for this. We have, I hope, nearly done with the once useful but now almost obsolete *jealousy* of government, which blossomed in the worship of the

"voluntary principle," and which used to maintain that government was useful only as a system of police to protect body and goods, while all other ends requiring association should be worked out by voluntary associations alone. This was a theory suitable enough to a time when the power of government was monopolized by a small class, and was often used for the most unjustifiable class purposes. But it only expressed the wholesome dread of a strong central power, which was rightly entertained so long as the centre of government was not the centre of national life. I believe that no class in the English nation is half so sensible of the advantages of individual sacrifice for the sake of the whole, and of the possibility of to some extent equalizing the risks and hopes of all—not always indeed without endangering the liberty or limiting the enterprise of the individual—as the artisan class. In truth, what we have at present to fear from this class, as may be seen in the popularity amongst them of the proposed Permissive Bill, is a tendency to encroach on the fair liberty of the minority for the supposed moral advantage of the majority. It would not at present be unreasonable to fear that, if the artisans gained too soon the complete control of government, they might impose undue restrictions on the genius and the tastes of the few for the sake of protecting the multitude from the consequences of its own moral weakness. This is undoubtedly the tendency of prohibiting overtime, even for adults, or discouraging it by requiring, when it is adopted, a much higher rate of wages, instead of leaving the individual labourer to judge for himself. As Mr. Hughes said in a late Reform debate, the artisans have many of them

so high a conception of the obligation of the individual workman to remain in his class and raise its level, rather than to rise out of it into the richer class above, that they regard a working man who so uses his liberty as to prove that he cares more for his own fortunes than for those of his class, as we should regard a public servant —say a Governor-General of India—who should show by his policy that he thought of his own advancement first, and only in the second place of the honour and influence of his country. This state of feeling is entirely confined to the working class, and has arisen almost wholly out of the semi-patriotism which the contests between the Trade Societies and the Capitalists have fostered in the artisans; and it is looked upon (I think very justly) with suspicion and jealousy. It is indeed right that there should be some organized social whole which every man should regard with loyalty and devotion, but it is certainly undesirable that such a whole should be usually smaller than the nation,—and mischievous that anybody should suffer for not possessing an inner fold of class patriotism within the outer fold of national patriotism. If a man chooses to give himself up for the welfare of any particular class, well and good; but it should at least be no reproach to another man to feel that his energies fit him for some sphere different from that in which he was born and bred, and that he will be truer to himself by rising out of his class than by devoting himself to it. Still, what seems to me so important is that this great, though perhaps misdirected, class patriotism, which the artisans have cultivated so carefully, and which has given occasion for the display of so many noble as well as ignoble qualities, should be turned to national account.

In the other classes we have at last attained a tolerably clear conviction what the liberties are which the individual has a right to keep sacred from the invasion of the State. But I think only the working class have got,—partly from their trade organizations,—a clear conception how much individuals owe, by way of self-sacrifice, to the larger social organization to which they belong. The first instance of the political action on a considerable scale of artisans was an interference on behalf of the ignorant and overworked children of the cotton districts, and resulted in the Ten Hours Act. That act contained logically the germs of a measure for compulsory national education, and practically recognised that every individual is bound to sacrifice all hopes of gain which can only be got at the cost of stunting the life and growth of others. And I believe that a wish for compulsory education and for limiting the hours of children's labour is by no means the only instance of that spirit of individual sacrifice for the sake of the greater life of the whole class or nation, which pervades the very heart and imagination of the working class. The principle of mutual insurance, which, in the Deferred Annuities Act and in the Post Office Savings Bank, Mr. Gladstone has stamped with the national guarantee, is capable of much wider application; and it is probable that, as the working classes gain greater influence in the State, they will be able to show us that, in our undue confidence in unlimited competition, we have frittered away many national privileges, which can only be shared to the utmost extent by all, when they are administered for the benefit of all by a really national Government. I do not think we shall ever fully understand how much

a Government can do for the common life of the nation, and that without curtailing any legitimate sphere of individual liberty, till we have the spirit which has shown itself in the great Trade Societies grafted into the richer growth of our national politics. The cohesion of no class of society, except the class of artisans, has ever been strong enough to work out such ideas as these. The cohesion of other classes has been based on merely selfish interests, the interest of a party resolved to maintain its privileges against all assailants. In the case of the Trade Societies, the necessity for an external and militant unity has no doubt been strong enough, but it has been second to the necessity for internal and interdependent unity,—the unity of mutual assistance and a common life. Hence I think it is reasonable to expect that, transferred to the larger sphere of politics, and tempered by the influence of other political creeds, the self-denial, the party good faith, the wonderful *esprit de corps*, the *solidarité* which has been displayed in so marvellous a degree by the artisans, will open a new era of political organization.

And, finally, I do not in the least believe that they are right who maintain, like Professor Blackie, that the enfranchisement of the artisan classes will be unfavourable to the individual ascendancy of great men, that it will promote fickleness, caprice, and irreverence for moral superiority, such as is often attributed to democracies. On the other hand, I should be inclined to fear a somewhat too great and careless trust in the leaders who had gained the confidence of this class by complete honesty and large popular sympathies. On *small* political questions the artisans will never be accurately informed, and

consequently their representatives will be far less like delegates with respect to most political questions than are the representatives of better informed constituencies, where individual voters have more political influence. I suspect, for instance, that Mr. Gladstone, widely as he differs from the mass of artisans on many points, would be allowed, on ecclesiastical questions, to pursue his own course more freely, and with far less danger to his ministry, if he were leader of a House in which the working class had large influence, than he ever will be in a Parliament such as we now have. After the artisans are once satisfied with the sympathy, ability, and honesty of their leaders, no class is so tolerant of differences of opinion, or so willing to be faithful to leaders with whom they cannot wholly agree. In fact, at the present moment, notwithstanding the divergence of his wishes from theirs on many important questions, Mr. Gladstone is probably more popular with the artisans even than Mr. Bright, who, on political subjects at least, has far oftener expressed their views. The reason is to be found mainly in the business-like character of Mr. Gladstone's sympathy with the working class, the practical proof he has given that, in spite of many opposite currents of intellectual tendency, he has always been eager to lighten their taxation, to devise new security for their savings, and to welcome them in spite of political or religious differences into the organization of the State, as "our own flesh and blood." This being clear, those Conservative tendencies of his which so greatly offend some intellectual Liberals, seem to the artisans only proofs of conscientiousness and sincerity, and make them, if anything, admire him the more. I believe that the artisans will leave their Par-

liamentary leaders a larger freedom of action than is now given by most constituencies, and this partly because they care less about the *niceties* of political creeds, partly because they have a stronger feeling of personal loyalty to able leaders who, differing from them in many things, still devote themselves to fight their battles on the most important points of all. Certainly in the past nothing has been more remarkable than the steadiness with which the Trade Societies have acted on the judgment of leaders in whom they had confidence, even when their judgment in the particular instance seemed to be wrong. Often this has operated badly, but it shows how much liberty they are willing to give to their captains. It may be doubted if there are at present any representatives more conscious of individual liberty to act as they please, without regard to the fancies of their constituents, than Mr. Hughes and Mr. Layard, who represent the working class almost alone. Of course, on one or two great questions, they know that they have expressed the deepest sympathy with the working man, and that on these they must be faithful. But on all others very great differences of opinion will scarcely ever need a pardon while, in constituencies of another character, the chance of re-election would often turn on a single unpopular vote.

I believe, then, that while the working class show undoubtedly less intellectual range than the so-called "educated classes," they show, partly on that account, a more sure instinct as to which are the *great* political ideas of the day, and a more unwavering fidelity to them, which will be of the greatest use in increasing the efficiency of Parliament. Further, that they will introduce into

our foreign politics an element of more decidedly cosmopolitan sympathy, which is greatly needed in England, and is not at all likely ever to be in excess; again, that they will raise the popular value felt for the Government as an instrument of organizing our national life, and subordinating individual selfishness to the good of the whole State; and last, that so far from diminishing the personal influence of really liberal and able statesmen the working class will lend them a new power which in our middle-class Parliament they have never yet wielded.

Note, *Page* 30, *line* 17.—The Southern feeling of the Liverpool merchants was exceptional, and the result of their special interest in the prosperity, and their special connexion with the aristocracy, of the Slave-owning States.

III.

ON THE ADMISSION OF THE WORKING CLASSES AS PART OF OUR SOCIAL SYSTEM;

AND ON THEIR RECOGNITION FOR ALL PURPOSES AS PART OF THE NATION.

BY LORD HOUGHTON.

In urging the question of the extension of the suffrage, it is by no means superfluous to require from our opponents the admission that Representative Institutions are of themselves advantageous to the community, and that our present form of government is something more than a fortunate accident of history. If protection to life and property, intelligent and honest administration, the mitigation of physical evils by the application of science, the instruction of the young and the care of the infirm, the restriction of vicious propensities or the palliation of their consequences, and the most effective and economical organization of the means of national defence, are the main offices and objects of governments, it is difficult to defend the anomalies, confusions, and delays, which are incidental to every parliamentary system that the wit of man has hitherto devised. There is no reason that an autocratic rule should now be deformed by the cruelties

and violences of the various tyrannies which mankind, by the force of the social instincts, has been driven, in other times and places, to endure. The highly-educated nobility and the patriotic peasantry of Russia exhibit no abhorrence of a political condition which places their lives, liberties, and properties at the mercy of the Czar; while France, somewhat fretfully, but without serious opposition, not only submits to a similar destiny, but professes to find in it many of the social results of her great Revolution.

Nor would it be fair to assume that an oligarchical State, in the present civilization of the world, would suffer from the abuses and corruptions that made the dominant classes of ruder times odious and oppressive; rather is it probable that an enlightened sense of their own security and interest would place the chief authority in competent and sagacious hands. The perils of power are diminished by improvement of manners, no less than by expansion of intellect.

The advocates of the present limitation of political privileges may, however, assert their right of holding any abstract opinion on forms of government, so long as they believe that the representative system among ourselves is the appropriate machinery to procure that general assent and obedience to the laws which is necessary for the peace and prosperity of our country. They may remind us that the final, irresponsible Will, which, in relation to its subjects, admits neither of judgment nor control, and which in spiritual absolutism is represented by a Papal Bull, and in temporal by an Imperial Ukase, here resides in an Act of Parliament, and that the almost universal reverence of the people for the laws, and their

ready submission to an executive which is rather a symbol of authority than an actual overpowering force, demonstrate that they are, in the main, content with the source from whence that power emanates, and that, without the interference of honest theorists or interested agitators, they would desire no further alteration in the Constitution.

There is so much partial truth in these propositions that those who are urgent for Reform cannot afford to accept the test either of the beneficial results of legislation or of the apparent satisfaction of the mass of the community. They clearly perceive that such an admission would land them in an approval of the despotism of a philanthropic and able autocrat or of a benevolent slave-holding aristocracy; they feel that in such a mode of argument, the principles and benefits of Parliamentary Government are entirely set aside, and that, if they are to succeed in impressing on the minds of Englishmen the duty and the worth of the participation of a larger portion of the People in the political life of the nation, it must be by appealing to another order of facts, and another range of sentiments.

M. de Talleyrand used to say, that in a Revolution every political position was not a boon to be granted, but a fortress to be won. Now, it seems to us a characteristic of the pacific and normal progress of our Constitution, that each step has never been wholly the one or the other. From the time that our history emerges from the relation of conquerors and conquered, our rising liberties have been recognitions of existing facts: the principle has been taken for granted, the assault or the struggle has been for its application. That principle is the concurrence of the whole nation in the method and

distribution of its government—not assumed by an irresistible power, but legally and formally expressed through certain trusted representatives. The spirit of reverence that lies deep in the national character has manifested itself in a devoted loyalty, whenever the Sovereign has represented the mind and the heart of the People, but has not arrested the sternest action of national indignation, where that function has attempted to make itself self-sustaining and self-sufficing: it was the same sentiment that submitted with apparent servility to the Tudor who broke with Rome, and visited with death the Stuart that would have ruled without Parliaments. So absorbing has been this feeling, that even that bond of identity of nationality between Sovereign and Subject, which in most nations has been a necessity of the relation, has with us been superseded by political considerations, and the throne of an ungenial German, ignorant of our language and offensive to our manners, was defended with zeal and fidelity in the senate and in the field.

So, too, assuredly with the governing classes, in whose attributes and actions there are essential differences from the aristocracies of other lands. The very early recognition of the principle of the general representation of the People is all the more remarkable from the circumstance of the alien origin of the great landholders, and the temptation on their part to exercise all the irresponsible privileges of conquest. Yet the perception may have grown up in their minds that this was the best, if not the only way, in which the Nation, composed of such various races, could be welded together, conflicting traditionary customs reconciled, old pretensions to property obliterated, and present titles secured. The earliest Parliamentary

writs run as a summons to "all persons soever and tenants of whomsoever," and refer to the "common interest and concernment of all men in the well-being of the State;" and until the reign of Henry the Third, even the restriction of residence was unknown. It is the tone of many writers[1] to regard this and subsequent limitations of the suffrage in counties and boroughs, as overt acts of hostility and class-legislation, and to look on all developments of the Parliamentary system as usurpations of the Popular Rights. But it is hardly consistent with this view that the Law on this matter was never questioned, and that every change was made on the plea of procuring a truer and more effective exposition of the popular will. In their contests with the Crown, the Nobility, no doubt, offered a far stronger front when supported by a compact and well-organized body of freeholders; and the independence of the Towns was assured by those municipal regulations which absorbed, in some degree, the popular privileges. Selfish and corporate ambition, no doubt, did its work; but the anomalies of freedom were ever side-by-side with the anomalies of oppression. Such tyranny as produced the commotions of Cade or Wyatt, in what were at that time the manufacturing populations of England, was rare and exceptional, and the assertion of invaded rights is everywhere distinguishable from lawless riot.

To those who can see in the history of the House of Commons nothing but a series of usurpations and restrictions of original popular rights, it may also be suggested

[1] Including Mr. Chisholm Anstey, whose "Plea of the Unrepresented Commons" is a valuable contribution to the argumentative and historical literature of Reform.

to consider whether this semblance is not mainly due to the fact that the Commons did not represent any one class in the community, but were a composite body, in which all the interests and powers of that community met together, so that every general conflict between the Houses—that is, between the titled Order and the representatives of the Citizens—has been avoided. It was certainly better that the Nobility should strive for influence in the Commons, through their wealth and their intelligence, than that they should regard the Commons as political antagonists or as a separate Estate. Herein, indeed, lay the whole difference between Parliament being a control on the People or for the People: herein dwelt the principle of the Self-government of the Nation. What constituted that Self was, no doubt, a frequent subject of conflict; but the notion that outside the electoral body there existed a mass of individuals, conscious of political interests, capable of political conclusions, ready for political responsibility, and yet excluded for ever from any action by which they could signify their desires or opinions, is thoroughly alien to the nature of our historical Constitution, and belongs entirely to an order of things where Charters are treaties of peace between Princes and Peoples, and where the sole object is to prevent the outbreak of future hostilities.

It is a truism that the chronic existence of such a force of Thought and Will existing apart from their legal expression in Parliament must subtract from the representative character of the House of Commons. Under such circumstances an Act of Parliament would no longer seem the final judgment which every Englishman is bound

to obey, or submit himself to the verdict of that jury which, in the emphatic language of legal procedure, is his "country." There would be in the mind of every recalcitrant against authority a possible appeal to something beyond—to an opinion which had nothing to do with making the Law, and which only by inference could be said to consent to it—an appeal to an indefinite belief in a larger Justice, or a superior Wisdom. The respect for the Law that prevails in Great Britain is not a sentiment that can be generated in a day, by a Government of the purest intentions. When the Law comes from above, nothing less than theocratic power can ensure it reverence; and when it has been once regarded as an instrument of violence and oppression, it is long indeed before even its most beneficent discipline is willingly accepted. The penal laws in Ireland have defiled the very fountain of justice in the popular imagination, and rendered the government of that docile and honest nation, the most difficult problem of our legislation, because the confidence between the law-makers and the people is weak and uncertain.

But, besides the worth of the co-operation of all the acknowledged political mind of the country in the action of Parliament, as a security for the common support of the Law and public Order, there remains the deeper moral effect of the exclusion from the open political life of the State of ideas and beliefs, of hopes and fears, that may operate to any extent on the individual or social condition of its citizens. There is no more patent and powerful lesson derived from systematic connexion with Parliamentary institutions than that of the compulsory limits of human endeavour in accomplishing the

happiness of Mankind. If not continually recruited with youth and life, every political assembly would subside into a habit of disappointment that might result in sullen indifference. Only in new and fragmentary Conventions, such as the French "Constituante," or the Frankfort Parliament, the phantom of Society, regenerated by the enunciation of sound principles and the imperative demands of justice, reigns for a time, and vanishes in confusion, often leaving nothing behind except a scandal to liberty. And this is exactly what the experience of Constitutional life prevents and neutralizes. The lapses of the acutest intellects or the most accurate memories, the failure of the most careful provisions, and the perversion of the most honest intentions, are the daily incidents which every Constitutional politician records in others or in himself. These conditions may be forgotten by a momentary enthusiasm or an angry temper, or they may be lost in rhetorical expression, but they habitually tame the extravagance of theory and limit the vagueness of generalization. The unexpected impediments that daily occur in dealing with the wills and actions of other men not only prevent any serious statesman from attempting impossibilities, but leaven the political thought of every Member of Parliament, and almost of every reader of its debates.

Now the importance of this habit of mind is far greater in the contemplation of social than of political change. As it may be said to the disadvantage of politics as a business, that the professed politician is rarely a social reformer; so, on the other hand, the security against the sudden and violent ebullitions of social discontent afforded by a legitimate safety-valve of

political discussion can hardly be overlooked. Analogies with foreign nations are necessarily imperfect, but something more than a local or temporary application may be safely made of the events of the year 1848 in our great neighbour-country, which seems to have the double function of thinking and suffering for the world. After the terrible experience of the first Revolution, and the violence of asserted rights culminating in the triumph of actual wrong, permanent order seemed at last secured by a constitutional government, ably administered, eloquently advocated, presided over by a Sovereign of large experience and benevolent will, and a royal family which still, in exile, is eminent for talent and for virtue. So far from any offensive resumption of power on the part of the old aristocracy, they stood studiously aloof, and seemed, if not contented, at least subdued. The customs of the people were assimilated to the equality of the laws, and there were no symptoms of invading or affronting privilege. And yet there existed a division of classes, as complete as any of the ancient *régime*; there was a chasm as wide as ever separating sovereign and peasant; there was a small governing body—a *pays légal*, and outside of it a whole People to be governed. Now although this people had submitted for many years to a despotism gilded with national glory, it was still the same that had dreamt the perfectibility of mankind through the means of institutions, and had angrily protested against every national evil as a personal injustice. As Rousseau had set up the *Contrat Social*, there were now other writers and orators, not indeed as eloquent, but quite as delusive, who wrote and preached, with more or less sincerity and purity, the doctrine, that States have only to act without individual

selfishness, and to will that every man shall be happy, and the Paradise of the devotee will at once be realized on earth. The actual order of things might not be worse, they said, in France than in other countries, but it must be swept away, as the first step to the regeneration of the World. These were the visions of men, who dwelt as much apart from actual life as the monk of the strictest order in his cell, and in the absence of political realities neither they nor their disciples had any measure by which to judge of the weight of their words or the value of their ideas. It required only some chance evil audacity to set fire to this train, and one morning Europe was aghast to learn, that the Monarchy of the Middle Classes had been overthrown by a mere band of desperadoes working not on the unreasoning fears, but on the unreasoning hopes of the multitude, and that France had submitted almost without a murmur. The short illusion of reconciliation and the bitter end of the conflict of June in the streets of Paris, (the most sanguinary reprisal of modern history,) are lessons of something more than retribution; they show that where the best aspirations and the worst passions working in the popular mind are equally secluded from the public eye, and denied the free atmosphere of political debate, no material well-being will ensure content, and no kindliness of the governing power will divert suspicion. And thus it has come to pass that the almost symbolic participation in the choice of the government, which the people of France now enjoy, stands for an immense majority of them in stead of the securities for personal liberty and the energies and interests of parliamentary institutions.

It was the inevitable defect of the very breadth of

our Reform Act of 1832, that it had something of the character of a Paper Charter. By the number of political privileges that it abolished, rather than by those it conferred, it wore, in some degree, the aspect of a new constitution. Although in its deprivations it really did little more than confirm the historical facts of the decline and alteration of certain localities, and in its additions but scantily filled-up the increased proportions of the body-politic, yet, just demands had been so long delayed, and manifest decrepitude so long neglected, that the illusory fears of the aristocratic class, no less than the exaggerated expectations of many that were benefited, seemed to assume that something more had taken place than a natural development of our political liberties. The rights therefore, that the Act conferred wanted that prescription which is so agreeable to the English mind, and were rather an arbitrary settlement than a necessary conclusion. On the whole, however, it thoroughly satisfied the people, and fully represented the active intelligence of the community, but it said nothing and meant nothing that established the ten-pounders, or any other electors, into a permanent class, within whose arbitrament was for ever to rest the choice of the representatives, and, therefore, the legislation of the British Empire.

Unlike the "*Pays légal*" that provoked the French Revolution of 1848, our constitutional body of 1832 has been sufficiently comprehensive of all interests and conditions of society to retain for many years the political confidence of the inhabitants both of town and country, and the discontent, which in time arose, had a healthy and definite origin. The reformed Parliament, indeed, did not accomplish all that its sanguine founders promised

to themselves or others; but disappointment was not the soil from which a desire for further change upgrew. Legislation might be tardy, but it was undoubtedly beneficent, and when the House of Commons and its leaders were in earnest, they were sufficiently strong to bear down all opposition from the House of Lords. One by one the towers of old intolerance fell to earth; partial interests of commerce or of agriculture gave way to the advantage of the common consumer, and the more direct incidence of taxation set free the springs of industry. The occasional accessions of a Tory government seemed rather to increase than diminish the introduction of liberal measures, and the reproaches of the most querulous or most violent were directed rather against laxity or indifference, than against any presumed injury of legislation. It would therefore be a narrow observation that would attribute the revival of the question of the representation to any especial discontent. The causes were at once cognate and honourable to the spirit of our Constitution. The very success of the Reform Bill depended, not on the subsidence of the thoughts and desires of the people into submission to a privileged class, but on the peaceful and simultaneous development of the national prosperity, the intellectual education and the political sympathy of the nation. Without any one of these the future would not be secure. But if these were obtained, the extension of the suffrage from time to time would follow, as a natural consequence; and the only question for statesmanship to determine would be to make that extension co-equal with the political capacity and requirements of the country. Thus, while other peoples place their demand

for popular intervention in the affairs of the community on the ground of injuries to be revenged and wrongs to be redressed, ours stood on the basis of benefits to be extended and rights to be made use of. A man asking for the franchise was as far from the mendicant as from the bandit: he was a recruit asking to serve and the vote was the arm his country gave him.

If, indeed, the intention of the authors of the Reform Bill of 1832 had been at variance with those principles; if their object had been to place a definite social barrier between the legislative and the non-legislative portions of the community, the point at which the line was drawn was most unfortunate. In a country in which the workman has, from time immemorial, been as free as the peer, and in an age in which every day honest and intelligent labour grows in esteem and respect, nearly the whole of the persons, working for daily wages in the infinite variety of trades and occupations throughout the kingdom, would have been for ever excluded from any part or interest in the administration of the government, except by an occasional investment in fixed property, which a very small portion could conveniently afford. In a word, Capital stood on one side the line, and Labour on the other. It was no mitigation of this evil that the greater portion of these electors differed little, if at all, from the excluded, except in the fact of the possession of this small substantive wealth. In education, in manners, in language, the recipient of wages was undistinguishable from the smaller householder, and the independence, variety of experience, and self-control incidental to his less certain existence, often gave him a decided moral advantage.

Nor were the immediate relations between this privileged class and the working multitude without, such as easily to produce a long acquiescence of the latter in a political condition which made the former not only their masters in the workshop but their legislators in the senate. The indirect representation which might be sufficiently real if the interests and wishes of these bodies were identical, became a mockery when the working-classes banded themselves together into an opposing force, and defied their employers to an economical contest. The organization, which, with its good of sympathy and its evil of restriction, had characterised the Guilds of former times, has now passed from the whole Trade into the working portion of several of them, acquiring a powerful consistency; and whereas, formerly, each commerce looked on the outside consumer as his enemy, now the master and the public seem combined against the profits of the artisan. This is not the place to do more than register the fact, and apply it to the question of the suffrage. If the object of Parliament is to exclude every dangerous and disturbing element, and to consult above all things the peace of its deliberations and the unity of its action, there is no doubt that the possibility of an intrusion into its precincts of such a conflict of principles and interests as exists in the Trades Unions, would seem an anomaly and a degradation. But if the idea of the integrity of the representation requires that the House of Commons should be the centre of all political life, the sole arena of serious social contest, the mirror of the public mind, then the circumstance that outside of its operations, unaffected by its influences of contact and example, a tumult has been engendered and is increasing

in the judgments and passions of a large portion of our fellow-citizens, tending to subvert the sound principles of commercial freedom, to imperil the harmony of the daily intercourse of wealth and labour, and to limit even the individual freedom of Englishmen, is a matter of far deeper anxiety than even the possibility of imperfect legislation.

But why is it extravagant to anticipate that the same salutary influences of intercourse and debate which have gone so far to reconcile the conflicting interests of agriculture and manufacture will act effectively between the employer and the employed, when, through their representatives they stand face to face in the presence of the common-sense of the House of Commons? It is, indeed, a happy characteristic of that assembly that it has been the great conciliator of the Nation. With some rare exceptions, when religious passions have broken down all natural obstacles, the usage of our legislature for the last two hundred years has been one of gradual attrition of the sharp and dangerous angles of a most various society. To a careful observer there is nothing more interesting than the growth of moderation and justice which unconsciously takes place in the minds of violent or narrow men, after they have taken a parliamentary position. Nothing short of fanaticism can withstand it; and fanaticism soon becomes silent and slinks away. The superiority of the collective tolerance of Parliament to the historical prejudices of the country, has been shown in their treatment of Roman Catholic and Jewish disabilities; the former, indeed, relaxed too late in many points for political conciliation, but both abolished in advance of the sentiments and fears of the mass of the people.

This admission, indeed, might support the argument now in vogue, that this and other proofs of the intellectual or moral superiority of the sense of the present House of Commons, in its relation to political opinion, point out but too surely what will be the effects in the tone and temper of the House, if that opinion is more grossly and directly represented, and the influence of the class, whose daily labour excludes them in a great degree from reflection and repose, becomes predominant. There are two modes in which such a change in the character of the representation might be effected; by the personal presence of members of that class, or by the action of their representatives. With regard to the first supposition, the apprehension of any considerable number of Working-men, properly so called, becoming Members of Parliament, is hardly worth consideration. In the chances of the elections of large constituencies, many opportunities for such a choice have been already offered, and rarely, if ever, attempted: yet in the present just complaint of the absence of the representation of the thoughts and wishes of the operative classes, such an endeavour would have been not only justifiable but praiseworthy. Nor would the difficulty of providing the proper means of subsistence for such a delegate have been serious: a worthy gentleman sat for many years in Parliament as a county-member, under similar circumstances, being returned and salaried by the tenant-farmers, and was treated with general respect. Any member of this stamp, especially if a man of natural gifts, would be received with more than welcome, on all subjects on which he had personal knowledge to impart and personal experience to recount, by an assembly,

wearied with doubtful and second-hand information, and eager, above all things, for reality and facts. The same reception would not, perhaps, be given to a representative who was believed to have taken up popular politics as a lucrative profession. Such a man will ever obtain harsh judgment and scant credit from a British Parliament, and after a few failures the experiment would probably be abandoned, and the choice of the working-classes would fall on men of independent position who really sympathised with their objects and strove after their welfare. But there is little fear of a deluge even of philanthropists, for in a short time the specialty of the representation of the working-class would become as little acceptable as that of any other exclusive interest. With all our talk of the separation and isolation of classes in this country, which is so unintelligible to our brethren on the other side of the Atlantic, the House of Commons in its ordinary routine, and in its essential spirit, not only gives no countenance to such distinctions, but acts as a positive protest against them. Social superiority, and even intellectual eminence to which it has not itself contributed, are regarded rather with suspicion than with favour, the moment that any design is visible of using them as a pedestal from which to reach political power. The watchful ostracisms and jealousies, incidental to a republican order of things, are there just as dominant as in old Athens or in present Washington.

But, it is further asserted, the larger introduction of this popular element into the constituencies will so debase and coarsen the whole procedure of elections, that with all good-will on the part of the working-class to be well represented, the more educated and refined portion

of our society will be driven out of the political arena by the very roughness of the contact, and end by becoming a separate social sect, like the Legitimists in France, or the men-of-letters in America. The injury done to the working of free institutions by the abstinence of any considerable body of citizens is certainly not to be disregarded, and the probabilities of such an issue must form part of our calculations. In France, indeed, where a large body of the aristocracy live, so to say, in a continued position of internal emigration, the nation has nothing to do but to leave them in the full liberty of their discontent; but, in England, though signs have unfortunately not been wanting of a disinclination on the part of the representatives of the historic houses and territorial principalities to live up to the responsibility of their name and station, yet the aggravation of this evil by the circumstance of the admission of a larger body of plain working-men into the constituencies seems very contestable. The consequent increase of numbers would hardly have this tendency. The political dealing with masses of men has about it something in which the finest and noblest natures have ever found dignity and delight. The appeal there is to sentiments which the many feel better than the individual, and to interests higher than those of any one self among them. There is, no doubt, both some moral gain and political instruction in the semi-private relations of any Member of Parliament with a small constituency, when carried out in a friendly and honest intention; but the petty and personal annoyances that are distasteful to men of leisurely habits and fastidious tastes, are much more frequent under such circumstances than in the connexion with a vast electoral body. It

was hardly becoming that Lord Palmerston at his advanced age, and in his position as First Minister, should have been compelled, within a few months of his death, to undergo all the inconveniences of a personal canvass of the borough he represented, while it would have been neither labour nor trouble to him, to have once or twice addressed such a constituency as that of the City of London. No one weightier example indeed of this truth could be afforded than the story of the candidature and subsequent career of the shy and reluctant philosopher, who has been vivified into the most active political existence by one contact with the mother-earth of popular sympathy, and who appears to find as much satisfaction in the ruder exhibitions of public feeling, as in the solution of the subtlest arguments.[1] Those, therefore, who anticipate any signal difference in the general character and condition of the Members who would be elected under a broader system, will in all probability be as much disappointed as the prophets of degradation and confusion. No man worthy of the position need dread the enlargement of his trust or the elevation of his duties.

A graver question lies before us in the results of opinion at which these novel constituencies may arrive, and which they will require their representatives to advocate and maintain. Unless, however, our national disposition undergoes some incredible change, it is difficult to suppose, under any redisposition of the constituent body, an exclusive and combined action of the

[1] It is notable that the much-abused Metropolitan Constituencies have never refused any candidate presented to them with claims to distinction in politics, literature, or the public service, though unaccompanied by wealth or high social position.

Working-men of this country, neutralizing wealth, ignoring intellect, rejecting experience. The very individuality which makes them aspire to independence, and fits them for the suffrage, negatives such a supposition. There may and will be certain storms of popular feeling that may sweep over separate thoughts and sentiments; but the suspicion that the chronic condition of the mind of the mass of the people should be an agreement of opinion upon all important matters of foreign and domestic policy, an agreement arrived at, not by a deference to those whose opportunities of leisure imply means of larger information, but by some intuitive process of their own wills or passions, implies an entire inversion, not only of English, but of human, nature. In communities devoid of political education, no doubt, the people are often unanimous in ignorance and in fear; but, just in proportion as they have learned to think on such subjects, diversities of thought become inevitable—just in proportion as they are taught to argue, their inductions will be various and their conclusions contradictory. The very principles of emulation, of ambition, of contest, will of themselves suffice to martial the manual Labour of the country, quite as much as the Trade or the Capital, into antagonistic bodies within themselves, and to divert them, by the wholesome varieties of political action, from purely sectional ideas and combinations.

That a certain tendency and inclination in what is commonly called a Democratic sense will indirectly manifest itself in a Reformed House of Commons, the friends of Reform neither deny nor disguise. It is expected, and it is hoped, that there will be an increasing habit of regarding and conducting measures as they affect

the national well-being, rather than as they subserve party interests or individual ambitions; that there will be less of compromise in the enforcement of that kind of legislation which is generally admitted to be right in itself, but difficult to apply to present circumstances. If you get rid of the suspicions of partial and undue influences that still hang about the traditions of a purely aristocratic government, beneficial interferences and useful discipline will be submitted to by the masses, which would now be met with indignation and a spirit of revolt. Obligatory education would be taken from a popular House of Commons in a very different spirit than would follow the injunctions of the most kindly patron; an efficient Ædile, who would now run the chance of being stoned by the families he ejected from their pestiferous dens, may come to be regarded as a social saviour, if he is invested by the common opinion of the people with the character of their own chosen magistrate and friend. The impolitic retention of one unwise condition of the devolution of landed property stands in the way of the clear recognition of that perfect liberty of inheritance which England and the United States alone enjoy. When this is once removed, as it soon must be, the question of primogeniture becomes one not of Law, but of the Custom of the country, amenable to every modification that public opinion and the sense of right may introduce, without any violation of the desires, or even the prejudices, of the owners of property. If, indeed, a clearer sense of the duties and interests of family life brings about a modification of the system that educates the younger children of the upper classes in luxury, and then consigns them to a comparative poverty, which hardly

gives the men a fair start in life, and condemns a large portion of the women to discomfort and celibacy, the aristocracy themselves will be the chief gainers in the extension of their influence and the happiness of their homes.

The legislation of the future, indeed, cannot hope to be infallible, and the exigencies of the hour may distort political truth or overshade economic science. Free governments are no safer than servile ones from fallacies and delusions, and the United States and the Australias are fascinated by the immediate comforts of the protective system, as had been the old European States. The French Treaty was carried by the firmness of the Emperor, in defiance of the views and wishes of his people. Evils of this nature are incidental to the frailty of human nature and the imperfection of human knowledge; and if they do mar the excellence of our political future, we must look for consolation to the reflection that the introduction of a larger popular element into our ancient constitution is, after all, not a matter of free choice, but an alternative. If we refuse this Reform, we accept the responsibility of governing an unwilling and reluctant people: if we reject what may be, in some instances, a representation of defective knowledge and short-sighted speculation, we must be prepared to encounter an organized ignorance from without, and the boundless Utopia of revolutionary expectations: if we will not admit the Working-men into the great school of Public Life, we leave them to the free exercise of their instincts and their passions; if we will not teach them political wisdom, they will teach us political disaster.

IV.

THE BALANCE OF CLASSES.

BY ALBERT VENN DICEY.

"It is the principle of the English Constitution, that Parliament should be a mirror,—a representation of every class; not according to heads, not according to numbers, but according to everything which gives weight and importance in the world without; so that the various classes of this country may be heard, and their views expressed fairly in the House of Commons, without the possibility of any one class outnumbering or reducing to silence all the other classes in the kingdom."[1]

In these words Sir Hugh Cairns sums up that theory of representation, which makes it the end of Parliament to be the representative of classes. This view is entertained by persons who differ in every other political opinion. It is the pet theory of so-called philosophic Liberals, and of most intelligent Conservatives. Nothing indeed can show its prevalence more clearly than the indignant criticism excited by expressions of Mr. Gladstone, which seemed, though in all probability untruly,

[1] Speech, April, 1866, Hansard, vol. 182, p. 1463.

to intimate his adhesion to a totally different doctrine. For it cannot be concealed that the theory of class representation is fundamentally opposed to the arguments, which, till recently, have been employed by all democratic or radical Reformers. Of such men, Mr. Bright is the most eminent, as well as the most consistent leader; and the idea which lies at the bottom of all his theories of Reform, is, that representation should be primarily a representation of persons—only in so far as it may be so accidentally, a representation of classes. It is because of his entertaining this belief, a belief shared by nearly all the older Liberal leaders, that he is constantly reproached with the crudeness and unphilosophic character of his policy; and the fact becomes every day more apparent, that between persons who hold that the object of Reform is more nearly to represent classes, and those who cling to the opinion that its main end is gradually to give the full rights of citizens to all persons, there can be no ultimate agreement as to the course which ought to be pursued by Parliamentary Reformers. It is, therefore, of primary importance for all Liberals to make up their minds whether Parliament ought or ought not to aim at being, in the words of Sir Hugh Cairns, "a mirror of every class;" or whether it should aim to represent persons, and leave the representation of classes to take care of itself.

Before entering upon a discussion of the class theory of representation, and the arguments by which it is supported, it is well to clear away some misconceptions by which that discussion is confused. It is often, for example, asserted, that the most desirable kind of Reform is one which should admit the working classes

to a share of influence, without changing the balance of power. Persons who use this language either do not understand what their words mean, or mean something which they do not wish their hearers to understand; for it is of the very essence of all Reform to change the balance of power. If the working classes gain influence, some other class must lose it; and if each class remains with no more political power than before, then there will have been no real Reform; and it is not to be supposed that either working men or any other class, will be satisfied with a measure, simply because it is entitled a Reform Bill, and because, while changing nothing, it professes to change everything. If, on the other hand, what is intended is, that the alteration to be desired is one which shall leave the rich as powerful as now, but effect some new distribution of power between the 10*l.* householders and the working men, then the wish expressed for a Bill which does not change the balance of power, is doubly dishonest; since it does not express what it means, and seems to express what it does not mean. For the desire really felt is not that political power should remain unchanged, but that, within certain limits, it should be surreptitiously shifted in a particular direction.

It is again to be noted, that much which is often and honestly said about the effects of giving representatives according to numbers, is, strictly speaking, not argument, but rhetoric. It is constantly asserted, with more or less distinctness, that the enfranchisement of the masses is the disfranchisement of the rich. Such an assertion is, however, nothing more than a rhetorical mode of

saying that the influence of the rich will be unduly diminished by a wide extension of the franchise; for, as a matter of fact, no man is disfranchised by the enfranchisement of another. Take the most extreme case, and suppose universal suffrage established. In this case the wealthier classes might indeed be in a minority, but they would be as far from disfranchisement as any other equal number of persons in the kingdom. Under the most unfavourable circumstances they would exercise a controlling influence by supporting that section of the people to which they were least opposed. But the influence of a minority is always considerable, and the influence of a rich minority could never be insignificant. If a proposal were made really to disfranchise all possessors, say of a thousand a year, rich men would soon perceive the difference between being disfranchised and being in a minority. One partner of a numerous firm never dreams of stating that he has no vote because he may constantly be outvoted; and expressions which would be ridiculous applied to the transactions of private life do not gain additional force or accuracy from being applied to politics. The real question at issue is not one of disfranchisement, but of supremacy. Advocates of class representation desire such a political arrangement as would enable a minority, in virtue of their education, wealth, &c. to carry out their views, even though opposed to the sentiments of the majority of the people. Democrats, on the other hand, desire the gradual establishment of a constitutional system under which, in the case of a direct conflict of opinion between a greater and a smaller number of citizens, the greater

number may be able to carry out their own wishes. There are arguments to be used in favour of the views of either party; but the first requisite for weighing such arguments is to perceive clearly what is the point at issue. This point undoubtedly is, whether or not the greater number of the citizens ought to be made ultimately supreme in the affairs of the State.

The theory to which the passage quoted from Sir Hugh Cairns' speech gives expression may be summed up in the following propositions:—

(1) A nation consists of classes.

(2) Each of these may have, or may conceive themselves to have, conflicting interests.

(3) It is therefore desirable that each class should be duly represented.

(4) Since one of these classes greatly exceeds the others in number, it must not be represented in proportion to its numbers, because, if it were so, this class would be supreme.

This theory is supported by arguments which assume very various forms, but which may be reduced to a few heads.

It is, in the first place, urged that the nation is in reality an organization, of which classes are the essential parts; and much ingenuity is shown in the use of different metaphors, all of which aim at setting forth the idea that a nation does not primarily consist of the individuals who make it up. To most minds these attempts to distinguish between the nation and the individuals to be found in it, will appear as idle and unsatisfactory as the Aristotelian discussions about the natural priority of the individual or the State. And

without going into political metaphysics, ordinary writers may be allowed to point out that though individuals may be considered as members of different classes, it is as individuals that they either suffer or inflict wrong, and that their individual interests can by no device whatever be merged in that of the class to which they belong. The assertion indeed of a most able writer that "John Smith *quâ* John Smith cannot be oppressed, but John Smith *quâ* artisan can," neatly sums up what will appear to most persons the exact opposite of the truth, and affords a species of *reductio ad absurdum* of the application of very doubtful metaphysics to the defence of a doubtful political dogma.

It is not, however, reasoning of a transcendental kind which has lent a weight to the theory of class representation. An argument of real force, urged by some speculators, is that the introduction into the legislative body of members belonging to different orders of the community would tend greatly to improve the character of the legislature. No candid critic can deny that there is some truth in this allegation. The remark, however, may be justly made that representation according to numbers is not inconsistent with the presence in Parliament of men belonging to different pursuits and professions. The first French Assembly, after the Revolution of 1848, was elected by universal suffrage, yet amongst its numerous faults this was not one, that it did not contain members from different sections of the nation. It must further be noticed that it is not, and never has been, a primary object of constitutional arrangements to get together the best possible Parliament in point of intellectual capacity. Indeed, it would be inconsistent

with the idea of a representative government to attempt to form a Parliament far superior in intelligence to the mass of the nation. There is no doubt that most country gentlemen were till recently, if they are not still, grossly ignorant of political economy, yet no one supposes that for the purposes of free government it would be desirable to exclude from Parliament every squire who could not understand the fallacies of Protection.

A remark of far more importance is, that this argument, whatever it is worth, points towards the direct representation of orders, and means that there ought to be representatives of, for example, the Church, law, medicine, the working classes, &c. seated in Parliament; and thus its value depends upon the answer given to a question hereafter to be considered, *i.e.* whether or not it be on the whole desirable that Parliament should consist of Members for orders. It will, however, be found that the demand for class representation gains its force almost exclusively from a single line of reasoning.

It is said that without class representation the interest of individuals will never be fairly protected. Each class (and the working classes may be considered in this respect neither better nor worse than the rest of the community) will always consider its own interest as supreme, and therefore if it be sovereign will oppress all other portions of the community; hence it is of infinite importance that no one class should be sovereign. But representation of numbers would make the working classes sovereign, and thus, in denying to them representation according to numbers, statesmen deny them no more than is refused to every other class.

This argument admits of profuse and effective illus-

tration. It is said, for example, that the working men, being in a majority, might throw all the burden of taxation on the shoulders of the rich, and expend all the proceeds of taxation on the enjoyments of the poor, or might establish laws for the protection of labour as oppressive as the laws which English gentlemen established for the protection of corn.

The weakness of this argument is that the truth which it contains applies to all governments. The danger pointed to in the supremacy of numbers is a danger common to all supremacy. No distribution of representatives, no cunning device of political theorists, can prevent the existence in every State of some person or body of persons who can if they choose act contrary to the interests of the rest of the community.

But if it be alleged that tyranny is specially to be feared where numbers are supreme, there seems to be little proof for the allegation. In all countries the majority must be a fluctuating, unknown, indefinite body, which has neither the will nor the power to act with systematic tyranny. In England especially, where classes are intermingled, and where it is absolutely impossible to draw a clearly marked line between the different divisions of the nation,—where, for instance, it is hard to say what are the limits of the so-called middle class,—it is highly improbable that the whole of the poor (and it is only when acting as a whole that they could in any case be supreme) would act together as one man in opposition to the wishes of all those who are not technically working men.

For the so-called working class is, like all others, notoriously broken into divisions; for example, of arti-

sans and labourers.' The legitimate influence—to use the words in their true sense—of the rich and the educated has immense weight with all who depend for their livelihood on their wages. It is, indeed, a more reasonable fear that a widely extended suffrage may unduly increase the influence of landowners and capitalists, than that it will lead to the unexampled result of placing the multitude in permanent supremacy over the rich. There is, however, no use in blinking the fact that occasions might arise on which the majority of the nation might adopt a policy opposed to the judgment of the minority. But on such occasions, it is as likely as not that the majority might be in the right. The American Union was saved because the energy and decision of artisans and farmers overruled the hesitation and weakness of the merchants of New York.

But, of course, the majority is no infallible ruler. The working men of England might easily commit errors as great—they could not commit greater—as the mistakes committed by George III. and by Pitt. If, however, the majority should fall into errors, it may still be well that the majority should rule. All belief in free government rests ultimately on the conviction that a people gains more by the experience, than it loses by the errors, of liberty, and it is difficult to perceive why a truth that holds good of individuals and of nations, should not apply equally to the majority of the individuals who constitute a nation.

Advocates of class representation have expended immense ingenuity in devising schemes for effecting an hypothetical balance of power, and the complexity of these devices has given an appearance of philosophic

profundity to the theory which makes such devices necessary; for it is difficult for any one to believe that an object which needs thought and ingenuity for its attainment may, after all, not be worth attaining. But calm observers, though willing to give all due weight to the objections which may be urged against the representation of numbers, may yet be inclined to suspect that thinkers who advocate the establishment of a balance of power, entertain views open to greater difficulties than are the theories which these thinkers assail. It is, at any rate, worth while to remember that a scheme may be philosophic, even though it be simple, and though it command the support of Mr. Bright.

All schemes for effecting a so-called balance of classes are open to a primary charge of utter impracticability. Their object is to give "due" weight to each interest, but no standard exists by which the "due" weight may be measured. Mr. Disraeli is honestly convinced that the landed interest has not its due share of power. Most other persons would think a diminution of the influence of the country gentlemen essential to the establishment of a fair constitutional balance; but there exists no test by which to decide between the correctness of Mr. Disraeli's views and the views of his opponents, unless principles be introduced which are fatal to the theory of the balance of power. Sir Hugh Cairns, with his usual acuteness, perceives this difficulty, and gets over it by the suggestion that each class should have the power in Parliament which it has in the world without. Unluckily, the very object of all sincere Reformers is to effect a change in the social and other influences of different portions of society. It is, there-

fore, idle to hope to satisfy the demand for Reform by creating a Parliament, the object of which is permanently to embody distinctions, which Reformers desire to diminish.[1]

But even were it possible that persons of opposite views, such as Mr. Mill and Mr. Disraeli, could be brought to agree on the exact proportion of influence which ought to be retained by the landed, commercial, and working classes, under a future constitutional arrangement, such an agreement would be as worthless as it would be illusory; for in politics nothing is more certain than that it is impossible to predict how political and social forces will adjust themselves under a new Constitution. In 1832, no prophet could have foretold, as the result of the Reform Bill, that the practical supremacy of the middle classes would have been found compatible with government through the nobility. Had it been deemed requisite to ascertain beforehand what would be the exact amount of weight given by the Reform Act to each section of society, Gatton and Old Sarum might still be sending up Members to Parliament, whilst Com-

[1] It is not in truth to be supposed that a skilled lawyer, well accustomed to practical life, intends deliberately to advocate any elaborate arrangement for a representation of different classes. He would, doubtless, be content with the existing state of things. What, however, he must be taken to urge is, that any change ought to have as its object the giving representation in accordance with the power of different classes out of Parliament. And the policy he proposes may be easily shown to be open to the objection that has been brought against it. The landowners or capitalists, for example, have immense influence in modern society. Landowners and capitalists ought, therefore, according to Sir Hugh Cairns, to have an immense share of the representation. If this share be given them they will indubitably have the power, which they are likely to use, of hindering changes which might affect their own weight in society. Hence, deliberately to give to landowners and capitalists representation according to their influence is to perpetuate and, as it were, stereotype that influence.

mission after Commission was attempting to obtain information, which is absolutely essential if it be desirable to establish an elaborate balance of power, and yet is in its own nature unattainable.

Theoretical speculators easily perform in imagination feats which are found impossible by practical politicians, and various enthusiasts have sketched out, with more or less ingenuity and inconsistency, what should be the exact balance of power established in what one of their number has termed "the Constitution of the Future." Whoever wishes to see an excellent specimen of the speculations of the men who are called "thinkers," should read with care Professor Lorimer's book, in which this Constitution of the future is sketched out. It is instructive, at any rate, to observe that a Professor and a thinker, quite consistently with his theory, while giving votes to every man in proportion to his merits, gives only one vote to a simple citizen and ten votes to the happy possessor of ten thousand a year, who, indeed, would, under the Professor's scheme, as a general rule, have at least twenty votes.[1] This is instructive, because it points to the conclusion that the principles laid down by Sir Hugh Cairns almost inevitably tend in practice, as they do in Professor Lorimer's theory, to the establishment of a Plutocracy. But even this theory does not fully exhibit one of the most important features of class representation.

This feature is the introduction into Parliament of the representatives of orders. The ablest and most sagacious of the advocates of class representation distinctly contemplate this result, and, as before pointed out, one of the

[1] Constitution of the Future, p. 174.

strongest arguments in favour of their theory is the advantage which it is supposed would accrue to the country from the presence in the legislature of the members of different classes or orders. It is indeed a boast of some able writers that, if they deny to the working classes representation in proportion to their numbers, they are willing to ensure the working classes the possession of a certain body of, say fifty or a hundred, special representatives of the masses. It is in truth so apparent that any theory of class representation must ultimately lead to the presence in Parliament of members specially delegated to represent such different classes, that it becomes a matter of importance in estimating that theory, to settle whether the presence of such members would be a national gain or loss. The presence in Parliament of fifty or a hundred working men, or at any rate distinct representatives of working men, would not, it must be owned, in all points of view be without advantage. But if these men sat as the special representatives of a class, the advantage which their presence might confer would be purchased by incalculable evils. It may be pointed out in passing, that representation by orders, after having been tried in all European countries, has been universally given up, and this fact of itself suggests that such representation has peculiar defects; but the special evil which at the present moment needs attention is that the proposed representation of orders threatens to introduce supremacy of numbers in its worst form. Let there, for example, be fifty special representatives of working men in Parliament, and these fifty men will inevitably become, not members, but tribunes. Elected by a class numerically

the greatest, they will soon claim and exert an authority beyond that given them by their numbers. On a question of peace or war, they would have it in their power to enter, on behalf of the mass of the nation, protests against the course adopted by the majority in Parliament, and such protests could not in practice go unheeded whatever might be the theory of the Constitution.

In this matter it is unnecessary to appeal to *à priori* reasoning. Irish and Scotch Members are from the necessity of the case representatives of a class, and do therefore exert a force out of all proportion to their numbers. Few governments would dare to legislate for Scotland or Ireland in the face of the united opposition of the Scotch or Irish Members. Any one who is unwilling to see the working classes legislate for the majority of the nation, as the Scotch Members legislate for Scotland, will prefer the direct supremacy of numbers to the indirect supremacy of a tribunate.

For class representatives have an inherent defect beyond that of exerting undue influence. From their very position they at once display and intensify class feeling. What the leaders of Convocation are to the body of the clergy, that the specially elected leaders of the working men would be to the artisans. They would be the most fanatical, the most narrow of their class. Our county representatives, again, are a near approach to the representatives of a class; and the country gentlemen all but hooted down Mr. Mill because he tried to make them understand that a sick cow ought not to be valued at the price of a healthy animal. America itself is a standing warning, not against the supremacy

of numbers, but against artificial schemes for insuring a definite amount of power to certain classes, since the whole theory of State Rights is nothing but a theory of class rights carried out on a larger scale; and this theory till recently obtained such weight throughout America that most politicians were ready to attribute a sort of sacredness to the rights of States, just as enthusiasts for a balance of power are ready to see something sacred in the name of a class. For it is necessary to point out that, after all, there is nothing specially to be reverenced in orders or interests. Half the evils of modern England arise from the undue prominence of class distinctions, and the fundamental fault of class representation is its tendency to intensify differences which it is an object of political Reform to remove.

In criticizing a theory of class representation, the words "classes," "orders," or "interests," must be constantly employed. The very employment, however, of these expressions gives an undue advantage to the view criticized. For it is, after all, to be suspected that the very basis on which this view rests is not firm enough to support the conclusions grounded upon it. This basis is the assumption that English society can be, for practical purposes, divided into classes or orders. Classes no doubt exist, but they are not of the distinct, clearly-marked, homogeneous kind which the class theory of representation requires. In a society such as that of the Middle Ages, where marked orders existed, representation by orders, with all its disadvantages, arose, as it were naturally, from the surrounding condition of civilization. In a society like that of modern England

it is difficult to find the orders on which laboriously to build a scheme of class representation. Take, for example, a class frequently mentioned in political discussions, that of the 10*l.* householders. What, after all, is the real community of view or interest, which binds the members of the class together? They are of different politics; they pursue different professions; they belong, in many cases, to different religious bodies. Looked at in one point of view, they may be called a class; looked at in another, they are a disconnected mass of different small classes. Take, again, any class of Englishmen, from the highest to the lowest, and it will be found to mix, by imperceptible degrees, with the class below it. Who can say where the upper class ends, or where the middle class begins? Who, again, can draw a line which shall accurately divide working men from small tradesmen? Yet if there exist a class or order, it is the class of workmen. To those who see this class from without, and from a distance, it appears, no doubt, much more of a class or order than it really is; because its subdivisions escape notice. That these exist is granted even by Conservative speakers, who, like Sir Hugh Cairns, injure the force of their arguments by indulging in boasts of the Conservatism to be found amongst artisans. But let it be fairly granted that there is more class feeling among workmen than amongst the rest of the community. The reason is not far to seek. Treated as a class, they have fallen back upon their class feeling, and have devoted their energies to class interests. If it had not been for the Reform of 1832, the middle classes would form as distinct a body as the working men. A free extension of the

franchise in 1867 will, in thirty years, make the artisans as little distinguishable from the rest of the nation as are the men whose fathers in 1832 almost overthrew the Constitution from which they were excluded.

Much indeed has been said and written by Professors and theorists as to the unphilosophic character of the Democratic view of Reform. This view is, however, as a fact, held by men who, whether they think rightly or wrongly, have as much right to the much abused name of "thinkers" as their opponents. The so-called unphilosophic and vulgar Radicalism, with which politicians are taunted, who desire, slowly but ultimately, to make the majority of the nation arbiter of the nation's destiny, rests upon two principles: the first, that on the whole each man is the best manager of his own affairs; the second, that citizens ought to be looked upon, primarily, as persons, secondarily only, as members of classes. Those who take this view need not be blind to the advantages which may be gained by the free representation in Parliament of different portions of society. But they hold that, as a matter of fact, such representation of classes as is desirable has been obtained by gradually extending the suffrage to those personally fitted for its exercise, without measuring beforehand what might be the exact influence of such extension on the balance of power. It is, moreover, in the opinion of such radical Reformers, worth incurring some risk, to bring the mass of the nation within the bounds of the Constitution. The widest franchise any government is likely to propose, would, after all, stop far short of universal suffrage. The question, after all, therefore is, whether the risk (if risk it be) be not worth running.

The theory of class representation rests, indeed, on the assumption that theorists can sketch out the future of the nation; but this is an assumption which history and experience emphatically contradict. It rests on the further assumption, that national progress is best attained by ingeniously balancing class against class, and selfish interest against selfish interest. This assumption is, indeed, expressed by Sir Hugh Cairns, in a form which, from its very vagueness, commands general assent. Most persons are captivated by the idea of Parliament being a mirror of the nation; but a speaker's meaning must be gathered as much at least from the circumstances under which he speaks, as from his mere words. The true interpretation of Sir Hugh Cairns' sentiments is to be found in the fact, that his speech was made in opposition to a proposal, not for universal suffrage, but for a very moderate extension of the franchise, and that his political friends have averred, that if Parliament is to be a perfect "mirror," it should represent, at least as fully as at present, the important class of landowners.

V.

ON THE CHOICE OF REPRESENTATIVES BY POPULAR CONSTITUENCIES.

BY LESLIE STEPHEN.

AMONGST the popular objections to Democracy, there are few more telling than its supposed tendency towards a deterioration of public men. The argument is one to which no candid observer will deny a certain weight, but it is also one of which the weight is apt to be over-estimated. It is a prevailing error to judge of nations as we judge of people, by their manners. Many estimable persons, we know, condemned the Americans as a nation, because Members of Congress occasionally wore dress coats by daylight and chewed tobacco: which involves two or three errors of assumption; as that a man who chews tobacco cannot possibly be a honourable and intelligent person; that the inferiority of the Members of Congress to the English Parliament implied that the rest of the nation was in the same degree inferior to the rest of ours; and that a legislature is to be judged rather by its manners than by the work which it substantially turns out. Of course, there are

far more serious objections than these to be raised to the American legislature; and the sentiments of the kid-glove school of politicians are not to be taken as the fair expression of English opinion. Still, it is a fact that such vague prejudices floating in the ordinary English mind, unduly discoloured our views upon American politics. Their prevalence makes one or two remarks necessary, in order not to evade the argument, but to strip it of undue exaggerations. And, first, I may recall the very obvious consideration that the difference between a legislature of gentlemen and one not of gentlemen, may sometimes be rather a difference of form than of substance. There is such a thing as bullying in refined language, and telling lies, or receiving bribes, in accordance with all the usages of society. English statesmen have sometimes, it is said, blustered and browbeaten weak countries and afterwards truckled to powerful countries; if, in doing this, they have always used the language of gentlemen, that is a good thing so far as it goes, as doubtless of the two, it is better to have your nose pulled gracefully than awkwardly; but, for all that, the important fact is that your nose has been pulled. Corruption, again, is not entirely confined to the gross form of receiving a bagful of sovereigns; the ingenious practice to which Americans have given the expressive term of "log-rolling" may be carried on under a different name and in modes less openly repulsive. Somehow or other, a powerful pecuniary interest attacked in the House of Commons has contrivances for exercising an impalpable influence, whose delicacy would be scandalously ignored were they to be described as bribery. Our statesmen are above all suspicion of personal

corruption, and it is a fact of the highest value; but if we spend immense sums on certain departments without any corresponding effect, it is not uncharitable to suppose that some one is the better for it. In short, corruption is a disease of the Constitution, of which it is far less easy to effect a radical cure than to change the symptoms. An enlightened view of foreign politics, and a superiority to narrow personal interests, is supposed to be characteristic of educated gentlemen; yet it would be hard to say that the majority of English landholders have not attended pretty fairly to their interests as a class, or that they have not, on the whole, been distinctly opposed to all the great causes which have lately attracted the sympathy of European intelligence. The true reason doubtless is that they sincerely believed the British constitution to be the pattern to which all the world should conform — and themselves to be the bulwark of the British Constitution. These propositions may, or may not, be true, but they fall in most felicitously with the instinctive prejudices of a class.

It is necessary, then, to find some higher criterion of the merit of a legislature than merely the average social position of its members, or even their claims to be gentlemen in the higher sense of the word. The ostracism of the most intelligent classes, of which we have heard so much, is unmistakeably a great evil; but, admitting this fully, and even admitting, for the sake of argument, that it is a natural incident of Democracy, we might still urge that it is not the worst of evils; it might be more disastrous that the intelligent classes should predominate, and should use their power in their own interest, causing corruption to take more refined,

but not less demoralizing, methods. The ultimate test must be that upon which Mr. Lowe insisted so powerfully; we must judge a legislature as we judge an artist, by the quality of his work; not by asking whether he works in his court suit and ruffles, or in his shirt-sleeves and with a pipe in his mouth. Other essays in this volume deal with various arguments tending to prove that the work done by a reformed Parliament will, on the whole, be improved. The purpose of the present paper is to consider what kind of alteration is likely to take place in the tools by which the work is executed: but we must remember that even if the tools were in every respect inferior, they might still be employed to more purpose; and that we must estimate the anticipated change by its probable bearing upon the efficiency of the legislative machinery, and by no other standard. To the common cry, "Let us be governed by gentlemen"—we can only answer, "By all means, if they will govern well." Even if they do not, we will fairly consider what price it is really worth while to pay, in bad administration and partial law, for the comfort of knowing that our rulers are "all honourable men." But Parliament is, after all, a place for transacting certain important national business, and not a school of deportment, or a society for the practice of rhetorical decorum. It would, therefore, not be a conclusive answer to demands for Parliamentary Reform, if it could be shown that. Members of Parliament would, in the supposed case, be drawn from a lower class, or even be men of inferior education and a lower sense of personal honour. The assumption that this result will follow, supplies an admirable occasion for taunts, especially to those who consider good taste to be

a safe guide in politics; but even were the assumption accurate, the most important question would still remain for decision. A rogue sometimes does better under the master's eye than an honest man unwatched; the unrepresented class might, with good reason, prefer inferior members, over whom they could exercise an influence, to the most exemplary of mankind entirely free from such responsibility.

Thus much may be said in order to guard against the exaggerated inferences sometimes drawn. But I have no desire to evade the assertion that the character of our legislators is of very high, although not the highest, importance. The quantity of corruption and jobbery which may be generated in high places, by a dishonest body of representatives, is perhaps the least important consideration. If there is an effective control by public opinion, the work of the country is somehow done, and the corruption produces an effect of a secondary order; a great many pickings may be gained by private individuals without any vital injury to the public service. English public men have as high a character as any in the world; but the English administration is generally supposed to be as much hampered by the spirit of routine and red tape as others by illicit influences. The American Government is held up to us as a type of Democratic degeneracy; and the English newspapers exhausted their vituperative resources in denouncing its malpractices during the war. Yet, somehow, ships, and guns, and men were obtained in spite of incessant demonstrations of the utter impossibility of the feat; and their efficiency was kept up, at least as well as our spotless administration could have done the

business. Corruption is a great evil; but, judged by its apparent results in civilized countries, it is only in very extreme cases, that it becomes so virulent as to be a dangerous and not merely an annoying and offensive disease. The most serious injury that would result from a falling off in the character of our legislators seems to be of a less tangible kind. The English Parliament is, in a degree quite unparalleled, the centre of all the political discussion of the country. It is, therefore, exceedingly desirable that the discussion should be of as high a tone as possible—that the orators should really appeal to motives worthy of statesmen, and that their characters should be so pure as to place their sincerity above doubt. The good done by such speeches as those of Mr. Lowe or Mr. Mill upon the Reform Bill is not to be easily exaggerated; for they remove the discussion from mere technical trivialities to the broad grounds upon which alone it can be fairly decided; and the high personal character of many of our statesmen, which carries so much weight in the House, is of real importance to the country at large, as showing that political contests may be something better than a mere struggle for office. In this sense, it is true that the health of the political atmosphere depends, to no small degree, upon the soundness of the representative body; if politics are to be degraded into a selfish scramble, dictated by personal interests, the degradation would probably first show itself in the comparative rarity of men of high principle in the House of Commons; if, by the proposed change, additional obstacles were to be thrown in the way of such men, it might fairly be urged that we should be converting the chief body of

our political system into a centre of corruption; and the whole system might be affected by the contagion. I need only remark in passing, that even here there is the counter-consideration that it is easy to exaggerate even this effect. This reflex action of the House upon the country has its limits. The sound moral condition of the country depends upon far wider causes than the mode in which the franchise is distributed; and will ultimately determine the status of parliamentary morality, rather than be determined by it.

Finally, it is important that Members of Parliament should be drawn from our most highly-educated classes, because it is only amongst them that we can count upon finding statesmen of the highest order. It is impossible to argue here as to the degree in which any individual influence can affect national destinies; but every one will admit that it is highly desirable that our statesmen should be men of trained intellect, conversant, if possible, with some branches of public business, able to distinguish the true course of the deeper currents of affairs, and familiar with such thought as at present passes for political science—until that science is created. We need not look far for examples of the importance of this consideration. The heads of our departments have been too often young gentlemen, appointed apparently on the theory that the art of legislating comes by nature, especially to the sons of the great aristocratic houses. It was a noble position for Pitt to be Chancellor of the Exchequer at twenty-three; but, possibly, he might have been a better financier if he had had a few more years of study. In order frequently to obtain national leaders of the highest order (and without subscribing

to Mr. Carlyle's theories, I believe that such a leader is a national blessing), we must insure a supply of men qualified, not merely by intuition, but by careful political study.

Having attempted thus shortly to estimate the importance of the argument, let us endeavour to judge of the light thrown upon it by experience. And here we are met at once by the difficulty inherent in historical parallels. The argument from a nation of one race, constitution, and stage of civilization to another in which all the circumstances are altered, is seldom sound: it would frequently be fairer to invert the inference. What has proved suitable to one cannot suit the other. A constitution, said Hamilton, should fit a nation as shoes fit the feet, and the fact that shoes fit A is a good reason why they should not fit B. Thus the ordinary course of declamation in this matter is to take the case of America and the great English colonies, and to point to the alleged deterioration in their politics. Before we can admit that such deterioration, even if it exists, is likely to produce the same effects with us, we must inquire shortly into the main conditions under which it has taken place. America has been constantly and triumphantly cited to point this as well as a good many other morals. American statesmen, it has been said, have steadily fallen off. The statesmen of the Revolution, and some of those who immediately succeeded them, rose to the European level. Their successors have displayed inferior education and ability; the men of eminence have been gradually alienated by the growing corruption of politics; the game has been played so recklessly, and resort has been had to such objectionable weapons, that

refined and delicate minds have been frightened away. The business of the country has been left to those who were not above joining in the dirtiest intrigues, or pandering to the lowest popular prejudices. It was said the other day that a wide extension of our own franchise would throw our constituencies into the hands of millionaires and demagogues—of those who would buy the votes of the mob, or induce them to take flattery in place of cash. The same two idols, money and the mob, are asserted to be already supreme in Washington: the action of Congress is determined by those forces which have produced the national terms of Log-rolling and Buncombe; the natural consequence of which is the lowering of the character of American statesmen, if it is not rather the correlative result of the same causes. Gentlemen cannot join in a scramble for place and money, where the highest prizes are won by those who are least afraid of dirt.

It is impossible without a close familiarity with American politics to speak to much purpose of the degree in which these assertions are well founded; but two or three remarks may be made. In the first place, the degradation since revolutionary days, as measured by the character of the most prominent men, seems to be exaggerated by a simple cause. A man raised upon the wave of a great political convulsion is easily taken for a great man; Jefferson, Hamilton, Madison, and Adams are surrounded by the halo of the most cherished national glory, and their character has been estimated accordingly. To any one who will study their works it will appear that the two first were the only men who can claim the praise of any original intellectual

force; Jefferson was little more than a clever retailer of epigrams of the French revolutionary school, whose political career simply consisted in drifting feebly with his party; and Hamilton was a very energetic man of business with a curious incapacity for seeing beyond the British Constitution. To accept them as in any sense great statesmen, seems to me to be a mere concession to the requirements of national vanity. I think that any one who will study the career of the succeeding generations,—of General Jackson, or of any of the great trio, Clay, Calhoun, and Webster,—will come to the same conclusion as regards them. Webster was the only one of the four named who possessed the cultivated mental power which we associate with real statesmanship. Jackson was a rough backwoodsman, who could not spell, and it is singularly disappointing to study the lives or writings of any of the others in the hope of finding any rich stores of political thought, or any deep-sighted schemes of policy. They represented certain theories which are still dear to their countrymen; but on comparing them with European statesmen of any eminence, we cannot but be struck with the thinness of their speculations, and the corresponding limitation of their spheres of action. The supposed eminence of these statesmen has probably given an undue impression of their subsequent decline; I have dwelt upon it, however, not in order to contest the fact of such a decline amongst the rank and file, as well as amongst the leaders, but because the character of these statesmen suggests certain important considerations as to the peculiarities of American politics.

Two of these are very evident. It is useless to com-

plain of the inferiority of American statesmen unless it appears that better material is passed over. Now, with all its excellences, American society has a characteristic defect, which is as evident in other directions as in politics; it has not hitherto produced poets, or philosophers, or artists, any more than great statesmen up to the European level. This is put down by some people to the universal scapegoat "Democracy:" to me it seems to admit of a much simpler explanation with a less philosophical sound; it is due to the aggregate of causes which we mention when we call America a "young country;" that is, the temptations to a practical life are so overwhelmingly great, as directly to discourage any thorough intellectual training. A similar peculiarity of England as compared with Germany, prevents our competing with any success in their national speciality of Professors. Every ambitious young Englishman takes to the bar or politics, or some active life, and thus precisely the men most capable of distinction are generally draughted off elsewhere. In England, however, the competition is severe enough in every walk of life to make some thorough training necessary. In America, it is still possible to win some success with such facility, that high training, like high farming, is there thrown away. As the American farmer, with abundance of fertile land, only scratches his ground, so the student is content with a superficial culture of his mind. The exceptions have not as yet been sufficiently numerous, to form the nucleus of a really cultivated class, or to raise the general standard. It is from this cause I think that, whether we study American society, or books, or history, we are struck with the same phenomenon—the

immense number of minds which rise to great practical acuteness and facility, compared with the very small number who rise to real originality and thorough cultivation. I do not doubt that this will alter as society comes to a state of equilibrium, but, whilst it lasts, there is one excellent reason for the paucity of highly cultivated statesmen in Congress—namely, that there are none in the country; the class from which they should be drawn does not exist.

In the next place, a similar influence is exercised by certain peculiarities of the American Constitution. If the best and ablest men of America abstain from politics, it is not merely because the political life has become artificially degraded, but because till the present time it has been intrinsically of less importance as compared with private life than it is in England. Congress is generally compared with Parliament; but the analogy is strikingly imperfect. An Englishman meets Parliament, so to speak, at every turn: if he wants to make a railroad or a drain, or to bring about any ecclesiastical, or social, or legal change, he must at some point apply to Parliament. Every kind of agitation ultimately depends upon its reception in Parliament, and all public discussion radiates from parliamentary debates. If we were to strip Parliament of nearly the whole of its private business, to take from it all action upon the Church, or education, or social matters, all right to reform the great body of the laws, and to submit to it only a small part of our system of taxation, we should considerably diminish the direct inducements of our ablest men to enter it. Yet we should only be reducing it to the normal position of Congress. But, besides all this, the American Congress is

unable to offer another characteristic attraction of its English model. Although the war has at length decided that the United States form one nation, no Constitutional compact could fuse into one what was substantially an aggregate of independent States. Congress has till now partaken as much of the character of a diplomatic Congress as of a Parliament; it has resembled a meeting of delegates from independent nations as much as a supreme legislature. This fact, and the consequent limitation of its debates to certain specified subjects,—tariffs, banks, and admissions of new States, have necessarily deprived its debates of any special interest. They are scarcely reported in the newspapers, and have incomparably less weight upon public opinion than those in our English Houses. But the result of all this is obviously to diminish enormously the attraction offered to personal ambition. To be sent as the delegate of a State to vote upon the two or three points which Congress really has to decide, and to make speeches which will be scarcely read in the country at large, is evidently to fill an office with very few attractions for political ambition, compared to that of an English Member of Parliament with his innumerable opportunities for action, and for acquiring a reputation. Without enlarging upon this, which seems to be too often forgotten, I will only add that the characteristic abandonment in America to private energy of matters which elsewhere are settled by the State, tells with great force in the same direction. For example, the one fact of the absence of a State-Church and of all the politico-ecclesiastical quarrels due to the existence of such a body, removes a whole series of most interesting questions out of the category of public affairs. Hence the

intrinsic inducements to a public life in America seem to be comparatively so small—and were so much smaller until the war brought up more interesting subjects—as alone to explain why the most educated classes should care little about entering the struggle. They have little to gain, and much to encounter. A man may fairly say that he can do more good as a private citizen by encouraging education and the various institutes due to public spirit in America, than by intriguing to be sent as a delegate to spend months in settling a tariff at Washington. And, finally, America is a country in which, owing to obvious circumstances, so little government of any kind is required, that the profession of governing sinks into a subordinate position.

These reasons, as I conceive, go some way to explain the absence of really eminent men from the arena of American politics, so far as that absence is a fact. But they do not explain the progressive deterioration which has been asserted to take place. Of the extent to which that deterioration is a fact, I need not speak; I will assume it to be true that politics have become so far degraded that the practical administration of measures has been handed over to a distinctly lower class than that to which it formerly fell. In spite of any growth of corruption amongst the ministers of the sovereign people, the policy of that people is as much affected by really high principle and conscientious motives as that of any nation whatever; and the policy is ultimately carried out; but it no doubt suffers by the inferiority of the instruments which give it effect. Now I think that no one can fail to admit that the cause generally assigned for their inferiority is a true cause as far as it goes; I

believe it to be also adequate. The whole social body of the United States is to that of European countries almost as an expanding vapour to a fluid in equilibrium; all its particles are in a state of rapid motion and change, they are acted upon by intense and varying forces, and consequently assuming new shapes and relations with a rapidity to which we have no parallel. The constant expansion from within of native American society would produce sufficient instability; but we are also incessantly pouring in from Europe the overflowings of ignorance and pauperism. Into the boiling caldron in which all the social elements are working and seething, we turn a steady stream of Irishmen and Germans to disturb the balance of forces still more effectually. Of the effect which the Irish vote produces in itself, it is needless to speak, for it is only too obvious and too thoroughly known. The utter corruption of the local politics of New York, which has been brought forward as an argument against Democracy, is one of the most striking instances of the evil. To argue that, because the worst part of an emigration chiefly formed of ignorant peasants utterly unaccustomed to any form of self-government, which gravitates to the lowest purlieus of a huge city, is an admirable hotbed for corruption, therefore all popular government is corrupt, is manifestly absurd. It would at least generally be fair to set against it the admirable social results in the self-educating country districts of New England, or the energy and intelligence which have raised Chicago. But the presence of such a corrupt element, which has to be appeased and attracted, is fully sufficient to account for the degradation of the politicians by whom it is "exploited." Those who look to results and not to

abstract "rights of man," and admit that a constitution has to be fitted to the people concerned, will not draw from the comparative failure of universal suffrage applied to an ignorant mob, any conclusive argument against the success of a wide franchise under different conditions.

There is, however, another inference to be marked. The Irish vote is not the only result of the political conditions of the United States. The unstable foundation upon which the political superstructure is raised, would make itself felt under any circumstances. In any constitutional country that part of the political machinery which is defined by law is only a part, sometimes the least important part, of the whole. The Caucuses and Conventions of American politics, unknown to the Constitution, are amongst the most striking peculiarities of the system. The function which they discharge in America, has to be discharged in England under quite different conditions. In England there is little need of a caucus either in the great party struggles of the nation, or in the miniature struggles which take place in every town and county. One reason is obvious. The great English parties have certain recognised leaders to whose judgment they allow a very large discretion, and the same is generally the case in the fractions of parties which fight similar battles in miniature in every constituency. This is not due simply to the fact that leaders of parties are regarded with less jealousy and more generous confidence. We often trust them as little as possible; but, unluckily, we cannot do without them. They have a substantial power which we must recognise, however little we may consider them to deserve it. That power does not depend simply upon the possession of great

estates or great riches: it depends upon the instinctive respect which long habits of party discipline have made hereditary and inevitable. In every little constituency there is some one who is supposed to exercise a mysterious power called "influence." No one knows exactly what he could do if he were disposed, or how many voters he could coerce; but by tacit consent he has a position accorded to him which is probably out of all proportion to his real power. The same principle holds good even of the largest national parties; there is a disposition to follow the leadership of men belonging to certain families, or placed in certain positions, in which none but the irreverent dare to ignore a providential arrangement. Now the discipline dependent upon tradition and custom requires generations for its growth, and generations of quiet and continuous development. A rude alteration in the conditions of society, the importation into a country town of a new class of labourers who "know not Joseph," or the advent of a new class into political life, may break it up altogether. In a country like the United States these unrecognised and secret bonds are unknown, or are constantly in danger of being snapped; they may exist in the more stable rural districts; but in the large towns which yesterday were a prairie, where streets spring up as rapidly as houses in London, where instead of privileges of mediæval antiquity there are bran new Constitutions every other year, it is impossible that they should exist. The system of Caucuses is the necessary substitute—for good or for evil—to enable political affairs to be carried on. Where there is no natural political hierarchy in which every one instinctively finds his place, some artificial substitute must be devised. Of some of

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the bearings of this principle I will speak directly. Meanwhile it is evident how much advantage it gives to the professional politician accustomed to rapid and shifting intrigues, over the men who, in the case of stable social equilibrium, would be selected as leaders by the spontaneous respect of their fellow-townsmen. This phenomenon is owing, not to the democratic Constitution of the United States, but far more to its exceptional position of political instability.

As an illustration of the magnitude of this influence, let us consider this fact. The old States of the Union are the only ones in which anything like a settled social equilibrium has been attained. The great Western States have grown up entirely within a lifetime, and the population of such States as New York or Pennsylvania is in large part composed of equally new material. It is only in such States as some of the New England and of the old Slave States, where the native-born population is in a large majority, that we can find anything approaching to the normal condition of things. Now, if we take the composition of the House of Representatives, founded upon the Census of 1860, we find that the Western States (which seventy years earlier had no members) chose 114 out of 233 members, the New England and the old Slave States had respectively only 25 and 35 votes, and the Middle States 59. This gives some idea of the extent to which the society was in what we may call the colonial instead of the settled condition. As emigration had for many years previous to the Declaration of Independence been merely nominal, it is easy to estimate the marvellous change in the political conditions of the country. The strange thing really is, not that states-

manship had deteriorated, but that a population made up of such new and slightly coherent materials, should show such extraordinary powers of self-government. It is not the falling off in the standard, but its partial maintenance which requires explanation. I may remark too, that as members of Congress have to be citizens of the States which they represent, the inhabitants of the newer States are compelled to elect men of such refinement as they can find among themselves. They could not, if they would, avoid choosing railsplitters to represent them occasionally—sometimes to tolerably good purpose. When people complain of the falling off in the polish of American statesmen, they should remember the utter inversion of the conditions under which they are chosen, and I think that they will find their wonder inverted as well.

It would seem, then, that the comparatively low standard of the political leaders in America depends upon many causes, some of which at least are totally inapplicable to England. Thus the actual insignificance in numbers of any highly educated class, the intrinsically small importance of political as compared with private life, the shifting and unstable condition of society, the constant influx of a poor foreign population, and the consequent absence of the system of hereditary party discipline, are all of them most important causes, and all of them peculiar to America as distinguished from England. Let us endeavour to estimate the difference in political results which this very great difference in social forces is likely to make in the two countries.

In the first place, then, the essential inducements to adopt a political life are likely to remain as great in

England as they ever have been, if not to increase, whatever may be the changes in the franchise. Parliamentary power is now so all-pervading, it reaches every man in so many different relations of life, and it daily grows so much in importance, that it is not likely to lose its charms for our ablest men. For good or for evil, the process of centralization will certainly continue, and more and more powers will be daily absorbed by the central organ of our political life. Landowners and capitalists cannot, on their own showing, afford to give up their share of power without a struggle. The attractions to those who have at heart the political or social Reforms which most affect the country, will certainly not diminish. The only charm of a parliamentary life which is likely to decay is that of the social position of the members. A great infusion of the popular element might certainly tend to diminish this inducement. But even this charm depends chiefly upon the extent to which the upper classes can retain their power, and the whole question therefore resolves itself into this, whether these classes will in fact be unable to obtain a share of power so necessary to them in so many respects; for it can hardly be doubted that they will be desirous to do so. Let us first argue the question on the assumption—of which I will afterwards consider the accuracy—that they will not be obliged to adopt such a test of political faith as will practically exclude them; or, in other words, on the assumption that the proposed Reform will be such as to admit a tolerably fair representation of all shades of political opinion.

The decision of this question is, I think, much acilitated by a comparison of England with America.

The political power of the English upper classes, like all political power, depends upon two causes—upon the privileges expressly conferred upon them by statute, and upon the moral influence which, in one way or another, they exert over their countrymen. It is too common to argue as though constitutional arrangements created, instead of giving effect to, the existing social forces, and that argument involves a fallacy which constantly vitiates the most showy political aphorisms. Thus, any large Reform would materially diminish the power exerted by means of nomination boroughs. The disfranchisement of Calne would destroy part of the influence exercised by one great family, that part which is overt and recognised by the Constitution, and would deprive Mr. Lowe of an easy means of obtaining an entrance into the House of Commons—a circumstance which all parties should sincerely regret. Still, a man of Mr. Lowe's talents would be very apt to find some other means for gratifying an honest ambition. The advantages of small boroughs have been set forth as eloquently as the advantages of every anomaly which has become an integral part of a system, and therefore been made of some use. If every man had one leg six inches shorter than the other, we should find it convenient for walking in certain positions, and argue against an equalization in compliance with a theoretical symmetry. Small boroughs have doubtless been occasionally the means of introducing men of talent—as have large boroughs; but we must remember two things:—First, that men of talent have a tendency to occupy the most comfortable berths, and there are undeniable comforts in small boroughs; but it does not follow that if this particular avenue to success

had been closed, they would not have found others. Secondly, we must take the system as a whole, and must deduct from the advantages of introducing able members, the disadvantage of introducing them in a dependent position. If it was a gain to the country that such a man as Burke could be brought into Parliament without an expensive contest, it was part of that system which made it impossible for the most profound political thinker to occupy more than a subordinate position in the Cabinet, as a dependant of the great Whig families; the remnants of which are still one obstacle to placing the most distinguished of our present leaders in the position to which his hold upon the country entitles him. The influence given by the possession of small boroughs was, of course, chiefly used for the benefit of the possessors; if it incidentally produced an occasional set-off to the abuses, the result can only be considered as a very secondary and unimportant consequence.

The main influence, however, of the upper classes undoubtedly depends upon what may be called the occult and unacknowledged forces which are not dependent upon any legislative machinery. England is still an aristocratic country; not because the nobility have certain privileges, or possess influence in certain boroughs. A power resting upon such a basis would be very fragile, and would go to pieces at the first strain upon the Constitution. The country is aristocratic, because the whole upper and middle, and a great part of the lower, classes have still an instinctive liking for the established order of things; because innumerable social ties bind us together spontaneously, so as to give to the aristocracy

a position tolerably corresponding to their political privileges. If this instinct ever dies out, so that the political ceases to be the expression of the social organization, it will be utterly vain to bolster it up by legislation; any such expedients would be temporary, and cause sufficient irritation to insure their downfall; it is because the correspondence has become palpably imperfect that some Reform is now imperatively demanded. When we consider the enormous power which the upper classes can exert, either by the means of money or by the prestige of rank and birth, we may fairly doubt whether any extension of the suffrage would materially alter the composition of Parliament. The representatives of the people would naturally be selected chiefly from the classes which would have such an undeniable advantage in the struggle for votes. Why do not the ten-pound householders even now return men simply to reflect their own class-prejudices? Partly from the direct influence of money or patronage, but partly also because an Englishman of that class likes a lord, and would give his vote more willingly to a gentleman than to one of his equals. Consequently a gentleman, if he only chooses to enter for the race, has a great chance of winning it. So, so long as the aristocracy are willing to provide us with legislators, it is pretty certain that the demand will equal the supply. When Lord Amberley was lately a candidate for Leeds and Nottingham, he was only known to the public by the ridicule of which he was the butt. It will do him, doubtless, as little harm as it generally does to a man with courage enough not to be put down. But the readiness with which he was, even then, accepted as a Radical leader, in spite of the

laughter, merely on the faith of his name and position, is a sufficient proof, if proof were wanting, of the charms of aristocratic title to the British public. In short, our nobility have a sufficient interest in legislation to make it impossible for them willingly to sacrifice advantages of influence sufficient to make it impossible to oust them against their will.

It is true, indeed, that an important change may be expected, for the object of Reform is that there should be a change. It is assumed to be desirable that the working classes should exercise more direct influence, and that their opinions should be more fully represented. The extension of the franchise without a change in "the balance of power" for which Mr. Disraeli sighs, appears to be the very definition of a political juggle. It is evident that if men like Lord Amberley are to be elected for large constituencies, they will have to pay for it by reflecting popular opinions. Members of Parliament may still be drawn from the superior social class, but they will be drawn from that minority which is looked upon by the remainder as traitorous to its own cause. I only argue at present that the Radical noblemen will still have an advantage over Radicals of lower position. Moreover the direct influence of the aristocracy will of course be diminished by the transfer of seats from nomination boroughs to large towns. Instead of gentlemen put in by the direct influence of great influence, we shall have a larger number of men who, by any of the various means known to electioneerers—by money, or rank, or influence of any kind—can please a large constituency. The nobility will exercise a power corresponding to their position in the general opinion of their countrymen; but

they will be exposed, so to speak, to a free competition, instead of receiving a direct legislative protection. And in this case, although it is absurd to argue that the removal of protection would amount to a destruction of their influence, it is, I hope and believe, true that it would distinctly diminish it; or rather, those whose only hope of admission to the House lies in the small boroughs would be superseded by the class who can only hope for success by means of large constituencies; although a very large number of the present members would doubtless manage to enter the blessed haven even if their present channels of admission were closed. The narrow gate would be a little narrower, and the broad gate rather broader than before; but the same class of men would still force an entrance. We should endeavour then to compare the excluded with those who would probably be admitted: on the one hand there would be the young men who will take a seat when it drops into their mouths, but who will not trouble themselves to contest a large borough; the men of eccentric views who cannot accept any party platform, but can nevertheless please a patron or buy up a little town; the men who will invest money permanently in political influence, but will not corrupt a large and changeable constituency at intervals; and the young men of ability who are put in by discerning patrons to learn Parliament practice early, and become the Pitts and Foxes of the future, but who would not have courage or money enough to stand by themselves; and other classes too numerous to mention. On the other hand there would be all those who by good or bad influences are able to please the fancies of large bodies of men. Which system is likely to provide the best test—to be most attractive to

gentlemen, and, what is far more important, to men of intellect, education, and character? The representative class would be shifted. We should lose certain persons at one end, and take in some at the other to supply their places. The great bulk of representatives would probably be drawn from the same class—from those who can afford to have a strong desire to be members of Parliament; but the qualification would be somewhat altered as far as it depends upon social position, and still more so far as it depends upon opinion.

To strike an exact balance of the loss and profit to be anticipated would doubtless be impossible. In a general way, it may be said that the class of members now representing our metropolitan constituencies would be increased at the expense of the class which represents the smaller boroughs. If we were to compare the two classes by a simple enumeration of their present representatives, no one could say that there would be much loss in experience, or ability, or cultivation. Out of the eighteen representatives of metropolitan boroughs, we find such names as those of Mr. Mill, Mr. Göschen, Mr. Layard, Mr. Hughes, and Mr. Torrens. It can hardly be asserted that eminent talents and position exercise a smaller influence in London than elsewhere. The truth seems to be, so far as experience goes, that the contrary is the case. In a small borough it is impossible to exaggerate the pettiness of the interests which determine the issue. It is not that money or social influence, or petty intimidation, exercise an influence in a small constituency, which they fail to exercise in a large one. Such powers are powers all the world over, and no form of government yet devised by man can prevent them from being even

too effective in an old and highly-organized state of society. But in addition to the trifling quarrels which distract Eatanswill in an election contest, stronger and deeper emotions are effective in a large town. The little puffs which produce a tempest in a teapot, are powerless in a great popular body. When the public is thoroughly excited by some great question of war or internal policy, the members of small boroughs are comparatively sheltered. The storm passes by and harms them not. They are safe in their little backwaters from the waves which are propagated over the surface of a larger society. In the presence of such questions as the part which England should take towards America or the advantages of Free-trade, the tradesmen of a country town still ask whether Mr. A. B. will change his grocer, or Mr. C. D. turn out half a dozen tenants. And even in calm times it is simply useless to rely upon the power of enthusiasm. A seat must be won by a series of petty intrigues, not by appeals to principle or position. There are doubtless certain advantages in this—especially to those who think that by ignoring strong popular passions their effect can be neutralized, or that such an ignoring is not more likely to produce an undignified shilly-shallying than a decided course of action. But the disadvantages are also palpable. Take, for example, such a case as the last Westminster election. Let us put it on the lowest grounds on which even Mr. Mill's opponents would rely. It was, we will assume, decided by no very exalted considerations. The voters were ignorant and stupid. Many of them had never heard of Mr. Mill, and knew no more of his logic than of Sanskrit. The old party organizations were still useful, and Captain

Grosvenor's cabs were an important agency in returning the great political philosopher. All this and more may be true, and may be fully granted. But it is also true that the efficient cause of Mr. Mill's election was the enthusiasm which his name excited in a large number of thinking and educated men; that the zeal with which they supported him induced the electors to accept him upon their recommendation; and that, in short, whatever were the intermediate steps by which Mr. Mill's reputation was brought to bear upon the electors' votes, that reputation really caused his election. If he had been Socrates and Aristotle and the late M. de Tocqueville rolled into one—if he had had the eloquence of men and angels—no electioneering agent of experience would have counted that fact as a force of any importance in such a borough as Calne or Harwich. It would not have brought him a vote, or influenced one petty tradesman or labourer in comparison with a five-pound note or a threat of discharge from employment. Even in a University constituency, which really likes distinguished representatives after a certain pattern of distinction, his crotchets would have told more against him than his abilities in favour of him. But in a constituency like Westminster—which is far from a favourable specimen of a metropolitan constituency—the voters were ready to accept the unanimous voice of educated public opinion, and to overlook a great many objections from religious and other prejudices. The advocacy of the rights of women, of Mr. Hare's scheme, and of unpopular views upon theology, for which Mr. Mill was notorious, were industriously urged, but without any serious effect. And the election thus amounts to a demonstration that, taken by itself, a great

reputation is really a most powerful assistance in such a contest. It would hardly be possible to select any man of liberal views whose election could more conclusively refute the theories about democratic dislike to men of eminence, but of individual peculiarities. In fact, the common-sense view of the subject seems here to be true. In a large body of men the great thing is to appeal to popular enthusiasm by effective advertisement, and no advertisement is more effective than a really great reputation amongst tolerably educated people. Even those who do not know of it for themselves feel instinctively its weight.

The same inference may be drawn from the elections of such gentlemen as Mr. Hughes, Mr. Torrens, or Professor Fawcett. That their political opinions are decidedly democratic is true; and, no one will wish to deny that an increase of large constituencies will increase the number of democratic members. But, given the opinions, the men of most eminence amongst those who hold them, will have an indisputable advantage as candidates. I have endeavoured to point out the circumstances which in my view more than account for the opposite tendency exhibited in America, and I will not repeat them. The more normal case, I believe to be that which I have attempted to describe.

In a healthy and quiet condition of society, where the lower orders are not united by any strong class prejudices against the higher (and I will directly refer to this provision), I believe that these results may be naturally expected. Wealth and rank and social estimation will always produce an effect which no legislation can neutralize. Wherever the area of selection is sufficiently

extended to make petty influences comparatively inoperative, the influences of a great name and of political enthusiasm will also produce a great effect. Democracies, though accused in popular commonplaces of fickleness, frequently show a touching faith in the idols whom they have once adopted. When a man has once become a symbol of some great principle, even when he has become personally popular, with a class, he holds a position of great strength, because the petty questions which agitate a smaller body, are imperceptible. And it would be easy to give many examples in which the belief in a popular hero has been if anything unreasonably strong. It is only by the voluntary abdication of the upper classes that the people may be led in time to choose a lower class of leaders; and there are, as I have shown, many reasons why such an abdication is highly improbable.

I have already remarked that it is dangerous to rely too much upon parallels drawn from different countries. Some light however may be thrown upon the subject, if we do not apply results too hastily; and I am glad to quote the following passage from some remarks made by M. Louis Blanc upon the experience of the French elections:—

"Where a great town," he says, "is included in the electoral district, the disposition to choose men of eminence is, and always has been, conspicuous, owing to the fact that men are apt to become more enlightened when brought into closer contact.

"As an illustration of this, I will point out the results of the election of 1848. Who were the men returned by the *Département de la Seine?* Why, the most illus-

trious men in France: Arago, her greatest astronomer; Beranger and Lamartine, two of her greatest poets; Lamennais, one of her greatest writers; Duvivier and Cavaignac, both distinguished soldiers; Marrast, a most brilliant journalist, by no means inferior as such to the celebrated Camille Desmoulins; Crémieux, Ledru Rollin, and Marie, leading members of the French bar; the venerable Dupont (de l'Eure), the most honoured character in France, &c.

"Now if, putting opinions entirely aside, you look for those who stand uppermost in the present *Corps Législatif*, so far as talent and intellectual superiority is concerned, you will find Jules Favre, Thiers, Pelletan, Jules Simon, Emile Ollivier, who have all of them been returned by the Parisians; Berryer and Marie, have been returned by the inhabitants of Marseille. I need not add that if other eminent men like Michelet, Edgar Quinet, &c. are not comprised in the list of representatives of Paris, the reason is, that being determined to have nothing to do with the Empire, they have shrunk from presenting themselves as candidates."

M. Louis Blanc goes on to point out that under the Imperial Constitution it has been provided that instead of each department electing by general ticket (as Americans would say), it is broken up into separate constituencies, each electing one representative. The reason was that less chance was anticipated of the Government being opposed by men of eminence, when constituencies were smaller; and the result has been, in fact, that there were far more eminent men in the National Assembly of 1848 than in the present body.

Now, English artisans may, or may not, be less intel-

ligent than their French rivals, and the circumstances of 1848 were doubtless exceptional. Moreover, as French constituencies were all of equal population, the comparison is between town and country constituencies, not between large and small. Still this goes strongly to confirm the opinion which I have expressed that, in such places as our large metropolitan boroughs claims founded upon eminence and reputation will be recognised, which in small country places are simply worthless. It is nothing strange that in large places the fact that a man has been very much talked about, should be a great advantage to him. And in a normal state of things, where there is no counteraction of this by other causes, I believe that the advantage will always make itself felt. Nothing but a disorganization of all old social ties, such as necessarily occurs in new countries, or a complete corruption, which is certainly not commoner in a large than in a small area, can neutralize it.

Hence, I should anticipate that in large constituencies in England, we should have, with a sprinkling of demagogues, a large number of men of position, of talent, and of reputation. They have an undeniable power, and sufficient temptation to use their power. It is no small advantage in itself, that at any rate we should have more men who, for whatever reasons, are popular with large numbers, and can therefore obtain a degree of confidence, the denial of which hampers many of the ablest men now in Parliament.

And what would be lost? We should lose, it has been said, young men. Many young men of ability have managed to please large constituencies, and not the less for their youth. I doubt whether we should not obtain

a larger number of young men of real merit, by taking those who have the spirit to fight an open battle, than by selecting those who are willing to be put in for some nomination borough by powerful friends. It is common to paint the young man like Pitt or Fox, who goes into Parliament early and learns the art of debating and party tactics. Is this such an unmixed advantage? Did these young gentlemen learn the art of legislation, which is rather more important than that of Parliamentary manœuvring? Should we not find better material by obtaining members who have learnt in other walks something of commerce, or of law, or of administration, in place of some of those who pick up these matters incidentally whilst practising the government of the country by instinct? Certainly the case does not seem to be so clear as not to admit of an argument. We should have fewer of those independent gentlemen, the glory of our country, who govern us from motives of pure ambition, and without any direct self-interest. Well; people without a direct personal interest have also their faults. They are very apt to be ignorant, when they are not interested, and to be governed by class prejudices in default of more direct, but scarcely more prejudicial, interests. The balance of advantage can only be struck by taking a wider point of view than this. And, as a conclusion, the result to which the whole investigation leads seems now to follow, if we include a consideration already noticed, but not discussed. The social forces which produce our present Parliament would, as I have endeavoured to show, produce a substantially similar result, if the present constituencies were greatly enlarged; but under a con-

dition which has hitherto been tacitly assumed. There would be differences, and differences, as I think, to the advantage of the new system. We should probably have fewer dilettanti statesmen entering merely to gain social consideration, and with little real sympathy with the great wants of the country; we should have more real workers, on the whole more men of reputation and experience, and, if some lowering of the social standard might take place, there is no reason to anticipate a serious lowering of the cultivation, much less of the efficiency of the future members. But the condition which I have hitherto assumed is that the persons to be enfranchised will be not merely the "same flesh and blood," but accessible to much the same influences as their present constituencies. Beyond the pale of the present franchise there extends a population which is not, perhaps, separated by any sudden and profound chasm from those within. I believe that the same forces which operate in a higher sphere will affect even the lowest classes to a considerable extent, and that, therefore, the assumption made is not substantially inaccurate. I think that the rich and socially eminent will be able to meet competition in our open market more effectually than they suppose.

But I will now suppose that the allegation of the opponents of Reform is substantially accurate; that their fears have some real ground, and that the lowest classes are as distinct from the upper as the negro from the Yankee. I must still dispute the validity of their logic. To some extent their facts are indisputable. It is unfortunately true to some extent, that when we advance much beyond our present limits we come upon a stratum of entirely

different composition, with feelings, prejudices, and interests of which the upper classes generally know as little as if they inhabited a foreign country. Somewhere between the highest and lowest there is a great social gulf, which is very partially bridged over, and across which there is not much communication. No one can doubt that if the new Parliament were to be elected exclusively by working men, it would apply itself to a totally new set of questions, and show a totally new spirit in many respects. In many respects, too, its tendencies would perhaps be as narrow and more ignorant than those of the present Parliament, although I think that the questions discussed would probably have a more important bearing upon the national welfare. Now it is frequently assumed that any large extension of the franchise would, in its practical results, amount to such a complete transfer of power; and that the most numerous class, by voting together, would entirely extinguish the influence of the classes above them. In short, the educated people, according to the usual phrase, would be "swamped;" and, although a full discussion of this argument would lead me into a wider subject, its bearing upon the narrower topic may be briefly indicated.

I have hitherto endeavoured to point out that the influences of rank, and wealth, and education, are not limited by the recognition given to them in the Constitution; that, protected or unprotected, they will produce an effect which no legislation can take from them. But if the franchise is to include a large and totally heterogeneous mass,—differing profoundly in sentiment, in religion, and in manners—may not the balance of power

be totally upset? To this I have answered, that I do not believe that in a normal state of things there is any class of English society in which money and social position do not produce a great effect: hence I do not believe that any complete transfer of power is possible, if desirable; the effect of the natural social forces cannot be eliminated by any legislative artifice. But let us now assume that such a constituency as that supposed may demand that their representatives should accept tests of opinion, from which most educated men would shrink, and that the representatives, although elected from the same classes, would consequently be the Mirabeaus of the class; the minority, who would condescend to utter the Democratic shibboleth, would usurp a very large share of Parliamentary influence though they could not monopolize it. As I believe in Democratic principles, I should welcome this change within due limits; but I admit that it might lead to too small a representation of the educated minority, and that it might tend to lower the standard of Parliament. Granting this fully, I still think that the argument conclusively proves the necessity of a large extension of the suffrage; for what is the very basis on which such arguments rest? It is that there is at present a large class whose sympathies are totally alienated from those by which the governing body is determined, or, at least, who would, if they had their way, insist upon a change of policy; moreover that this class is actually in the majority and so decidedly in the majority, that it could overpower all the influences that would be brought to bear by wealth and intelligence. It is so united that it would force its demands upon us, and could not be disintegrated by all the combined attacks

directed against it. I believe this to be grossly exaggerated, and only to approximate to the truth in regard to certain social questions in which the working classes are, to a considerable extent, united. But, assuming it to be true, how far is the remedy of excluding these classes from any solid share of influence sound or satisfactory? Does not the fact of excluding them from legislative influence, teach them to look to other means, and weaken Parliament quite as much as it weakens the Democracy? We have constantly had the tyrannical practices of Trade Unions dinned into our ears, as though they supplied a conclusive reason against allowing workmen to have the suffrage. To me, it seems equally conclusive the other way. In the first place, the power of organization amongst workmen is even now becoming daily stronger for good or for evil. No Parliament could venture for a moment to interfere with it; it would be as much as the British constitution is worth, to touch a hair of the Trade Unions' heads; our legislation is necessarily timid and ineffectual because the interested parties have no weight; therefore, as matters at present stand, the evil, if it be an evil, spreads and flourishes, and we must look on and do nothing. Moreover, the exclusion of workmen from the franchise tends, if anything, to spread it faster; if men have no chance of receiving help from Government, they will look to themselves, and no one can blame them. But it seems to be supposed, that the workmen, if admitted to the franchise, might attempt to help their principles by direct legislation. Doubtless Members of Parliament would have to discuss more questions affecting the social welfare of their countrymen than they do now; and that

is one of the paramount reasons for Reform: but it is quite another question whether workmen would be able to enforce unfair demands better in Parliament than out of it. Many excellent reasons may be given against it. They would have to discuss these questions before the whole nation, instead of fighting in the dark; the whole intelligence of the country would be brought to bear upon their claims and detect their unsoundness: the mere putting them into shape and discussing them would infallibly bring out the differences among the workmen themselves. Even as it is, the men in a particular trade are generally beaten by the masters in a struggle (we used to be told that the "inexorable laws of Political Economy" proved that they would always be beaten); this is some presumption that in a struggle between labour and capital carried on in Parliament, where all the other interests would be easily arrayed and organized against unfair demands, they would be still more decisively defeated. Even in Democratic America, the kind of legislation suggested has not been carried out, although occasionally discussed; in England, the various influences which would in such a case be brought to bear upon Parliament, would make it perfectly hopeless. At the same time, the agitation of questions affecting the welfare of the labouring man is most desirable, and is even becoming essential to a satisfactory state of Parliamentary health. Hence in this case, and in others which I have no space to discuss, we seem to arrive at the conclusion that the plan of remedying an evil by ignoring it is radically bad and short-sighted. It tends directly and energetically to increase that profound division of classes

which is one of the great evils of the time, and which may some day result in the very catastrophe most dreaded. Perseverance in the present system alienates the working classes from the upper, because it implies distrust of them; but it does nothing, or next to nothing, for the complementary object of restraining their power: it only compels it to grow, as it were, in the dark, instead of in daylight: and, at some future day, it must come to the surface. I will not pursue this argument with such questions as the effect upon foreign politics, or other questions less directly connected with class prejudices. I will merely observe that in them all the same principle may be traced, that by forbidding one of the chief social forces to act upon Parliament, Parliamentary action is made vacillating and uncertain, but the force is not itself neutralized.

To apply this to the more immediate question: the choice of Members becomes of secondary importance when compared with such considerations. If it were true that the admission of the working classes to the franchise would lower the Parliamentary standard; if, for example, it became common for working men to be returned, it would be a cheap price to pay for filling up the existing social gulf. It might even be worth while for Mr. Lowe to play the part of Curtius. The question of whether members would be a little more or a little less gentleman-like becomes insignificant by comparison. This much, however, may be said: the one essential condition for obtaining great statesmen is that the body politic should be in sound health; and that every class should be so far in harmony with others as to have no profound political grievance rankling in its mind.

Even now, when a nation is united by the working of any powerful passion, great men come spontaneously to the surface. Petty class jealousies and bickerings fritter away the greatest talents, and render them valueless. The moral which I have endeavoured to preach is, that this is the first object at which we should aim, and that, if we are successful in this, the other and more ornamental reward of gentleman-like statesmen will be added to us spontaneously. The deterioration of public men, of which I spoke at first, appears to be a symptom of social disease; it may be due either to a complete upsetting and distraction of all the old foundations—a dissolution of the never hidden bonds of society such as we see in the United States; or, it may be due—and it is then a far more serious symptom, because it looks more like decrepitude than youth—to that pettiness of aim which is always produced by a constitution formed so as to exclude any class from its natural share of influence. In such a case statesmen may be very gentleman-like and of irreproachable deportment, but all their plans will be marked by a narrowness of conception, an indecision of outline, which is the natural result of small jealousies. They will be afraid to touch any question broadly and firmly, because they may be upsetting a delicate balance of power, or sacrificing the class interests of their constituents, or, perhaps, because they feel that they must respect, whilst they cannot ascertain constitutionally, the prejudices of the excluded classes. And something like this shilly-shallying, hand-to-mouth style of statesmanship seems to be characteristic of the English Parliament just now. We could bear to see its members drawn from an inferior position, if only they were more states-

manlike in the higher sense of the word. But this can hardly be expected till some decided stop is put to the present haggling for a little more, or a little less, power, and till we are allowed to set about serious improvements under leaders who possess the full confidence of the mass of their fellow-countrymen.

VI.

REDISTRIBUTION OF SEATS.

BY JOHN BOYD KINNEAR.

THE same principles which demand an extension of representation to classes at present unrepresented, make it imperative that the distribution of representatives should be re-adjusted. When boroughs containing only a few thousand inhabitants can, by their votes, neutralize or overpower the opinions of great cities, or great counties, it is plain that the representation of the latter must often be a mockery, and that their population is virtually, if not nominally, disfranchised. No mere extension of the suffrage can make Parliament a true exponent of the opinion of the nation, or procure for us the benefits of freedom from class legislation and oligarchic government, until we redress the gross injustice which gives to the inhabitants of certain favoured districts, sometimes even to one individual whose influence controls them, a hundred times the weight in Parliament which is assigned to the inhabitants of other districts. Accordingly, all Parties, and all Reform Bills, from whatever side proceeding, have admitted that a

redistribution of seats is an essential element of an amendment of our Parliamentary system. So fully is this recognised that the chief opposition to the measure of 1866 was based upon its failure to deal simultaneously with this confessed evil. (See Note, page 153.)

It would be waste of time then to argue that some change must be made. But the general assent to this proposition by no means ends the debate. As the admission that an extension of the suffrage is necessary, still leaves undecided the limit at which it should be fixed, so the agreement that there must be a reapportionment of seats, only opens the question of the extent to which it shall be carried. On the one side are ranged the partisans of equal electoral districts; on the other stand those who insist that only the grossest inequalities should be removed; between them are partisans of every different degree of change. And the divergence of opinion is made less amenable to reason by the fact, that the evil, which in this branch of our system needs remedy, is peculiarly a matter of personal influence or local profit. It affects rights which have come to be regarded less as held for the public weal, than as an appanage of private property. Every measure intended to deal with it invites the opposition of party interests, since it must inevitably have a direct and calculable bearing on the strength of political divisions in the House of Commons. In the House itself the discussion and decision are subject to the anomaly that the representatives of the very places which, by universal consent, ought not to enjoy such predominance, are yet suffered to speak and vote against the abolition of their own

indefensible privileges. But if such peculiarities largely determine the current of parliamentary inclination, they make it the more necessary that the public outside should examine and enforce the real principles involved in the question. Therefore, with the object of arriving at a rational basis for agreement, it is well, discarding all personal and party considerations, to review the arguments adduced for and against the modified retention of small boroughs, on the sole point whether they are, or are not, a beneficial element in the practical working of our Constitution.

The subject may be simplified by first dismissing from our concern any argument applicable to two classes of such boroughs, respecting which no dispute can arise at the present day. The first class comprises the bribeable constituencies. It is indeed true that bribery is not absolutely confined to the smallest boroughs. But it is true that it is most common in these, and produces in them the worst effects. When there are only a few hundred electors, it is within the compass of a wealthy candidate's means to bribe them all. In this case no unbiassed opinion is exercised on his merits at all, and he is sent to Parliament, to disgrace and defile that august body, for the sole cause of his riches and his dishonesty. But in a constituency of several thousand electors, scarcely any purse could be found heavy enough to supply bribes to all. Chiefly for this reason it is that there is so little bribery in the counties or in the large boroughs. In a close-run contest there would, indeed, still be a possibility of deciding it by a few bought votes; but the fact of its being close run would at least imply that, in the honest

judgment of nearly a majority, the successful candidate was a fit representative. Not only, then, would he be a real representative of a fairly large constituency, but he would be certified as, in their opinion, if not immaculate, at least not disreputable,—a great improvement upon the opinion inspired by some of the candidates for saleable boroughs now.

There was a different class of small boroughs which was extinguished by the Reform Act of 1832, and of which the conveniences are still spoken of regretfully by those amateurs of statesmanship who have ever since alarmed themselves with the difficulty, "How is the Queen's Government to be carried on?" These were the Treasury boroughs. And it is undeniable that they had certain practical advantages, which, though no equivalent to their evil, may be alluded to here, merely to show that such utility in no degree survives in the operation of private nomination boroughs. All that has been said in favour of the Treasury boroughs, as insuring to the Government of the day a working majority, or enabling it to introduce able supporters into the House, or to make the best appointments to its own offices, because sure of finding the nominee a seat,—is obsolete and inapplicable to our modern system. Under existing arrangements, neither great party can attain such objects except by favour of some of its adherents who happen still to retain possession of a family borough. But when the advantages can no longer be gained by the authority of the responsible party chiefs, but only through the good graces of a leading supporter, it is plain that the virtue of the system is lost. Government is not strengthened, but only made

more dependent, when it has to rely for help on the caprice of a single great house. Useful talent will not be promoted, however much its aid may be required by the Ministry, unless it can stoop to win and retain the favour of some individual peer. And the selection of the best men for offices is but seldom facilitated, when it becomes a question, not of merit only, but of merit combined with personal acceptability to the private patron of the seat.

Passing then to the consideration of such small boroughs as actually survive, and are really defended, we find them to be of two kinds. Some are considered as independent of external influence, others are either nomination boroughs, belonging to one family, or are so distinctly under the influence of surrounding land-owners, as to be virtually their tools. The advantages alleged to arise from each description, are in some respects distinct, in others common. Let us endeavour to analyse them.

In favour of the first class, the small independent boroughs, it is said that they represent the views and interests of the body of inhabitants of small towns throughout the kingdom. It would greatly aid the appreciation of this argument, if those who press it would tell us what such distinctive views and interests are. What does the native of a small borough desire, that is peculiar to himself and his peers? If it is a local job, the short answer is, that he ought not to have it. If it is any special adjustment of national questions, it would be desirable that we should know, from good authority, what it is. Ordinary common sense fails to discover the imperial theme on which the small burgher

is essentially at variance with the citizen. Such constituencies consist of professional men and shopkeepers, doing less business, and probably in general less educated and enlightened, than the corresponding classes in large towns; but not of any inherently different political complexion, and certainly having no separate interests in public questions. Nor are they needed merely to give variety, for there is abundant variety in the politics of large towns. These notoriously differ among each other on matters of Church and State, of Peace and War, of Liberalism and Conservatism, and on every conceivable topic of policy. In what respect does the constituency, that is numbered only by hundreds, take up an attitude which is not adopted by some one or other of the great constituencies? On what subject are the politics of the small towns so utterly and specifically discordant from all that finds acceptance with the multitudes, as to demand separate and distinct representation? Till some such subject be pointed out, adequate to the degree of authority claimed, credit must be denied to an argument which insists on the value of the opinion of very small towns on imperial questions. And even if a case were made for reserving to such towns a special representation of their own ideas or interests, the proper method would evidently be to group them all into constituencies of average size, so as to afford to all of them a voice, rather than to give the duty and the exclusive privilege of representing them to a few, selected at haphazard from their number.

But then we are told of the value of small boroughs, in affording openings to the introduction of special practical knowledge into the House of Commons. They supply a mode of representation, says Mr. Disraeli, in

his speeches of last year, to the Colonies, to India, and to the Bank of England, and he cites the names of one or two eminent persons connected with these departments, who happen to sit for small boroughs. The personal argument is, however, a foolish as well as useless one; and it would be idle to retort by citing the names of the numerous capitalists, East Indian Directors, and colonial merchants, who have found it as easy to be accepted by large cities as by small towns. It is contrary to experience as well as to reason, to suppose that gentlemen connected with such wide-spread interests would not find seats, if insignificant boroughs were abolished. If, indeed, as regards India and the Colonies, we deemed representation in Parliament to be proper and important, it would certainly be better to grant it by means more direct and certain, than by the retention of a class of English constituencies, in which it is just possible that a chance individual connected with these regions, may happen to be elected. We ought to call on these great dependencies to select their own representatives, rather than leave them to be selected by a petty English village, and out of the scanty list composed of the few men of Colonial or East Indian experience, who happen to be smitten with a taste for entering the British legislature.

Equally insufficient is the allegation, that public ability, unconnected with the local interests of large constituencies, finds a peculiar recognition in small boroughs. The fact is, that the most intense local feeling is notoriously displayed in the smallest towns. Exceptions are of course to be found, and these exceptions are made much of. But on the other hand, an important constituency has not only better means of judging of general ability,

being itself better informed, and more active-minded; but it is naturally desirous of obtaining for itself the additional weight due to recognised ability in its representatives. The City of London has shown a distinct preference for an actual or possible Cabinet Minister. Westminster has successively chosen a very distinguished general, and the most learned and liberal philosopher of his age. Lambeth elects Mr. Hughes; Finsbury, Mr. Torrens; Brighton, Professor Fawcett: none with any local connexion whatsoever, and known only as public writers and speakers. All the leading members of the late Ministry represented great constituencies; and it is impossible to point to any distinguished public man, who, were small boroughs abolished, would not be eagerly put in nomination for some of the large boroughs that would take their places, and be certain of election, if his political party had the preponderance. Indeed, the merit or ability which fears to face a large community, must be of a very tender and unpractical cast. There is no healthy thought which cannot trust to find an echo in the public mind. If, in the excitement of a great contest of principles, it should be for the moment rejected and thrust aside (as happened once to Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright themselves), it does not find itself bereft of influence. The platform and the press are open to it, even during the brief period of exclusion from the House of Commons. If it deserves its place, it will speedily be reinstated; if it is hopelessly in conflict with the spirit of the age, why should the opinions of a great and intelligent population be neutralized or disregarded, in order to find utterance in the House of Commons for one clever man's singularities?

Having reviewed the subsidiary arguments founded on the alleged personal and special advantages furnished by the class of small boroughs, I now come to the great and undoubtedly real reason urged for their retention. Mr. Disraeli, with characteristic boldness, has often pressed it in his discussion of the question; gallantly reckless, that, in so far as it is admitted to be valid, it is destructive of every other ground on which he claims consideration for his favourite class of constituencies. This main plea is, that the existence of small boroughs is necessary, to give a fair representation to "the landed interest," which without such aid, would find its representation in the counties below its deserts, and insufficient to protect its rights or its privileges. Now, in the first place, it is clear that whatever boroughs subserve this purpose, cannot at all, or at least, can only imperfectly and rarely, fulfil the different object of supplying seats to unknown talent, or to Colonial interests. These purposes can only be combined, when the unknown talent, or the colonial knowledge, happens to be so strongly biassed in favour of the "landed interest" at home, that it will on no occasion fail to give its support to the real patrons of the seat.

But to take the argument in its simplicity, let us try to find out what this new phrase "landed interests" truly means. It can only have one of two meanings, the just rights of the owners of landed property, or their unjust privileges. But who attacks their just rights? Where is the proposal, seriously put forward by any class, for encroaching on any just right of property, real or personal? The men who are now excluded from the franchise make no such proposal. Is there any danger, that, when recon-

ciled to our institutions by admission to the franchise, they will begin to entertain ideas of spoliation? The pretence is absurd, so absurd that it is never put in plain words. No Conservative orator ever defines the character of the peril to the just rights of property, which he professes to think he needs a double allowance of power to protect himself from.

What is meant then by the protection of "the landed interest" is the securing to its holders such an ascendancy, that they "can do what they like with their own;" that they can regulate all matters connected with their own taxation, or with the descent and management of their estates, according to their own uncontrolled wishes; that they can maintain the social and political ascendency, which by the system of an hereditary Peerage, of a law of primogeniture, and the institution of an unpaid magistracy, belongs in this country to their class. But in making this demand for special and exclusive self-government, they are utterly unconstitutional, for all these things are concerns of the nation, not solely of men of the class of landowners. Property, real and personal alike, is secured to its owners by the power of the whole community, and therefore the community has a distinct title to fix the terms on which it shall be transmitted and held. The maintenance of a House of Peers is a question for the decision of the nation, not merely of the squires. The administration of justice concerns the whole public, not solely the game preservers. The laws that regulate the descent and transfer of land, are of importance to the nation at large, not merely to those who at this moment own estates. Any attempt then to reserve a preponderating influence in the legislature to those who

possess that single species of privileged property is unreasonable and indefensible.

Indeed, the whole talk of carrying on government by the balance and for the benefit of "interests" is a modern and unconstitutional innovation. Government is for the well-being of men, not for the defence of interests. It has to deal with a thousand things more important than property. Its primary object is the security of persons, that of property is only secondary. The relations between Church and State, the education of the people, the laws of marriage, and all other social relations, the relief of the poor, the protection of life and reputation, and nearly every foreign and colonial question, take precedence in importance to any questions respecting property as such. In all these things men are entitled to votes as citizens, as individuals equally affected by the legislation, or by the policy the nation may adopt; and to subordinate their authority in such matters to that of the "landed interest," is a doctrine subversive of freedom, and tending to reduce our Government to that of a mere oligarchy of agricultural wealth. In all such questions, the accident that a man has inherited, or purchased, a certain quantity of land, gives him no rational title to a distinctive share of power. And in matters regarding his special property, he has no more reason to claim a peculiar weight in the legislation, than has the fund-holder in respect of his stocks, or the cotton-broker in respect of the bales that pass through his hands. The idea of a governing class, whose claim to power is only that it possesses property of a particular kind, is not endurable in the present stage of civilization.

But if it is answered that the argument is not put

to the extent of demanding expressly a predominance on the part of the "landed interest," but only a representation proportionate to its numbers, let us see what its real nature is, and what conditions it involves. Mr. Disraeli, who may be taken as the leading author and champion of this argument, tells us (I correct his figures by the latest returns) that the boroughs have a population of 8,638,569, with 334 members, while the counties, with a population of 11,427,655, have only 162 members. He admits, however, that the inequality is nearly redressed by the fact, that 84 of the boroughs are under the influence of the landed interest (Speeches, p. 457). This gives 246 members to the counties, and only 250 to the boroughs, and this, he says, is a fair approximation to the rights of the landed interest, though not a complete one.

But the first observation on this argument is, that it is taking population instead of voters as the basis of comparison, precisely the claim set up by the late slaveholders of the Southern States of America, who demand a representation equivalent to the number of negroes and whites together, though only the whites are to be permitted to vote. The number of county electors is but 540,271, and those in boroughs are 489,166, a ratio of 9 to 8, while the population is as 11 to 8. And if we consider that the number of boroughs ascribed to the landed interest by Mr. Disraeli is certain to be considerably less than a more impartial arbiter would rate them at; we may safely come to the conclusion, that the landed interest has at present a representation in Parliament very decidedly more than it is fairly entitled to, in regard to the number of electors it comprises.

There is no reason, however, that Reformers should

hesitate to accept Mr. Disraeli's principles, if only they are legitimately carried to their consequences. When he urges the claim of one section of the community to representation according to population, he can claim for it no more than its true numbers entitle it to, and he must admit that every other section should be dealt with on like terms. It will not do for him to seize on the total representation to which the whole population of counties is entitled, and then divide it among the different counties, so as to give a preponderance to some single interest in which a part of that population is concerned. Now he himself argues that the counties, or the landed interest, is not identical with merely the agricultural interest, — the landlords and farmers and their labourers. (Speeches, p. 460-62.) These he computes at only two millions out of the eleven who make up the county population; but this is an error, for the census states it (including the families) at nearly five millions. The landlord and farmer interest then, ought to have less than half the total representation which is apportioned to the counties and their dependent boroughs, while it is notorious that they have nearly the whole. Out of the 246 members ascribed to the counties by their leader, they ought, according to his principles, to have little more than a hundred.

What, then, should become of the rest? Mr. Disraeli's own doctrines will still supply the answer. He asks a representation for counties founded on the population of the whole, he is therefore bound to divide it among them according to the population of each. This would at once make some curious changes in the electoral map

of England, and a revolution in the strength of parties in the House of Commons. Let us glance at the most salient modifications. As the number of persons to each Member is, throughout England and Wales, about 40,000, it will be easy to see how a just application of this principle would work. The result of the arrangement based upon it, would be to assign (in all cases excluding cities and boroughs at present represented) 22 Members instead of the existing 4 to the West Riding of Yorkshire, 5 instead of 2 to the North Riding, 3 instead of 2 to the East Riding. To North Lancashire it would give 9, to South Lancashire 15, to North Cheshire 4, and as many to South Cheshire; to East Kent it would give 4, to West Kent 6, to Middlesex 9, to East Surrey 5, to North Stafford 4, to South Stafford 6, to North and South Durham each 4 Members, all in room of the 2 belonging to each constituency at present. At the same rate in Scotland, Lanark would have 5, Aberdeen 3, Fife 2 Members. Here would be 114 Members apportioned to these counties instead of 35 at present, or an increase of 79. The agricultural districts would not, however, gain in anything like the same proportion. Bedford would gain 1, Derby 3, Devon 5, Essex 5, Gloucester 2, Hants 1, Hertford 1, Lincoln 3, Norfolk 3, Somerset 4, Suffolk 2, in all 30. But this would be balanced by an actual loss in other agricultural counties. Bucks itself, if all had their due, would be mulcted of 1 Member, Cumberland of 1, Hereford of 1, Huntingdon of 1, South Notts of 1, Rutland of 2, Westmoreland of 1, Wilts of 1, Radnor of 1: while in Scotland, Peebles, Selkirk Stirling and Sutherland, are each far below the

standard number. Thus 16 would be the total gain of the purely agricultural counties, against 79 apportioned by right to the mercantile and manufacturing counties. But it is to be remembered that all these additions to the county representatives would be attended by the abolition of the small boroughs scattered among the rural districts. Mr. Disraeli himself has stated, as we have seen, the number of these which are to be ascribed to the predominating influence of the "landed interest" at 84 seats. It follows that if all these were abolished, and if it were thought to be just to give an equal number of members directly to the counties, it would be necessary, in readjusting the county representation, to assign nearly the whole addition to the non-agricultural counties.

It is scarcely worth while here to notice another of Mr. Disraeli's grievances, the remedy for which would be equally injurious to the cause he advocates. He complains that the increase of population in boroughs has overflowed their parliamentary boundaries, and now seriously interferes with the just representation of the landed interests in the counties. Estimating this, he first states the whole increase of population in the boroughs since the Reform Act (excluding the Metropolis) at "upwards of 3,000,000, much the greater part of which is located without the boundaries." (Speeches, p. 367.) Afterwards, perceiving the danger of this argument to his own case, he complains of Mr. Gladstone taking "much the greater part of 3,000,000," at 2,000,000, and himself reduces his estimate to 1,500,000 (p. 462), which is certainly not the greater part of three millions. But the result of transferring this

amount to the boroughs, would be to leave the counties a population of less than ten millions, while the boroughs would have above ten millions and a half. But, again, the counties include unrepresented towns, having a total population of a million and a half more, and if these are transferred, as by parity of reasoning they ought to be, and as Mr. Disraeli urges they should be, to the borough interest, it would give to it a total population of above eleven millions and a half, while the counties thus denuded would have less than eight millions and a half. Thus the final result of Mr. Disraeli's arithmetic, carried to its legitimate conclusions, is to lower the strength of his party to little more than two-thirds of what it seemed to be ere the calculations begin; while even of these two-thirds, a very large proportion would belong, not to the "country party," but to the manufacturing districts, which are but little favourable to the "landed interest."

Let us now, however, leave the examination of mere partisan claims, to consider what results would be afforded by a more national and equitable apportionment of representation. Neither justice nor independence would, it is obvious, be attained while leaving any very small constituencies in existence. Although perfect equality of electoral districts is unattainable, it is quite possible to reach such a position that no place shall send to Parliament double the number of members returned by the same number of voters elsewhere. And as public opinion becomes more enlightened, such a reasonable arrangement as this will doubtless be insisted on, and by degrees established. But to do it now, and only

by way of disfranchisement, would demand a very serious measure. It would imply, at least, the abolition of all separate constituencies of less than 20,000 inhabitants, and the taking the second member from all with less than 40,000. This would involve no less than 177 seats, though it would apply to a total of only 965,000 of population. Nay, the mere disfranchisement of boroughs under 10,000 would involve 69, having now 107 members, and taking the second seats from those under 20,000 would involve 23 more seats, though the total population transferred to the counties by the disfranchisement would be only 458,000. This would seem a large measure, though certainly no town under 10,000 inhabitants can be considered usefully or reasonably entitled to a distinct representative.

But there is a method often advocated, and recommended by experience, by which we can avoid disfranchisement, while retaining the distinction, established in our constitution for so long, and sanctioned by the necessary difference in qualification, between town and county constituencies. This is the process of grouping. But in applying it the error must be avoided into which Government fell last year, of recognising only the present represented boroughs. There are very many towns throughout England as fully deserving to form parts of such constituencies, as those which are now represented. And we may for the purpose of the investigation conveniently fix the limit of each such town at a population of 5,000, which is higher than that of many represented boroughs in England, and of many that form parts of groups in Scotland, but is taken by the Registrar-General as the standard figure at which a village merges

into a town. We may assume for the purpose of our examination that these groups can be arranged so as to have one member for from 20,000 to 40,000 of population in the smallest, although evidently the different constituencies may be of such dimensions as to have one, two, or three members to each. Comparing towns and counties in this respect we shall have in England and Wales—

	Population.	Members. 1 to 40,290.
In counties at present	11,427,655	
Deduct inhabitants of towns above 5,000 . .	1,495,079	
Counties under new arrangement	9,932,576	247
Boroughs now represented	8,638,579	
Add inhabitants of towns above 5,000 . .	1,495,079	
Boroughs under new arrangement	10,133,658	251

But still, after deducting the towns above 5,000 from the counties, there will, on a fair distribution of the representation among them, be a great preponderance due to the manufacturing and commercial districts. The four following counties alone would then still be entitled to the members indicated:—

	Present Number of Members.	Number to which entitled	Increase in Number of Members.
York	8	25	17
Lancaster	5	18	13
Stafford	4	8	4
Middlesex	2	4	2
	19	55	36

Still more marked, however, would be the result if we take, as we should do, the number of voters, actual or prospective, as the basis of relative adjustment. In this case, in transferring the towns of 5,000 and upwards from county and borough constituencies, we must estimate the loss of county voters, and the increase of borough voters, according to the usual proportion found to exist in each case between electors and population. I give this estimate in round numbers only :—

	Electors.	Members. 1 to 2,073.
Counties at present	540,271	
Deduct proportion in towns above 5,000 . .	67,500	
Counties under new arrangement	472,771	227
Boroughs at present (excluding double entries)	485,820	
Add proportion for towns above 5,000 . . .	75,000	
Boroughs under new arrangement	560,820	271

And now, to see what effect an extension of the suffrage would have, we must have recourse to estimates based on the number of occupiers at the lower rates in counties and boroughs, according to their relative population (see Return 1866, Nos. 81 and 335), deducting from boroughs the 28 per cent. and from counties the 25 per cent. which is found to represent the difference between the number of occupiers and actual electors. (Return 1866, No. 81, note, and County Returns, supplement.) I take a 14*l.* occupation franchise in counties, and a 6*l.* in boroughs, because we have returns for both, and nothing higher is likely to be again proposed, or accepted, by Reformers, at least in boroughs.

		Electors.	Members. 1 to 3,014.
Counties, less towns, as above . . .		472,771	
Additional occupiers at 14*l.* to 50*l.* . .	292,292		
Less proportion in towns above 5,000 .	36,536		
	255,756		
Deduct 25 per cent.	63,939	191,817	
Counties with new franchise		664,588	221
Boroughs and towns as above . . .		560,820	
Additional occupiers 6*l.* to 10*l.*, less 28 per cent.	238,780		
Add proportion for towns above 5,000 .	37,000	275,780	
Boroughs under new franchise . . .		836,600	277

These figures suffice to show what would be the result of the perfectly equitable application of the principle of equal representation of counties and boroughs demanded by Mr. Disraeli. Since the probable result would be to assign 277 Members to boroughs, all of such magnitude as to be reasonably independent of external influence, and only 221 to the counties, while of these latter nearly 60 would be absorbed by four of the leading manufacturing and commercial districts, it is plain that the arrangement is one which all Liberals must be eager to concede to the singular demand of the Conservatives. If the consequence should be that the "landed interest" should find itself greatly diminished in authority, it will be only in precise accordance with justice and with the facts of the case. But though the agricultural portion of the population barely amounts to a fourth of the whole, and therefore is really not entitled to more than a fourth of the representation, it will always (at least in our generation) be able, by force of its position, to control a much larger amount of representation than properly belongs to it, for

in the agricultural counties the non-agricultural part of the inhabitants consist chiefly of humble artisans and tradesmen, so dependent on the land as to be wholly subject to its influence. Therefore, in assigning to the agricultural counties the proportion of Members to which their number of voters are entitled, we shall certainly still give to the interest of the landowners a very ample, and indeed an excessive weight in the House of Commons.

It will, of course, be understood that the figures given above, which indicate the proportion of representation as between town and country, are not intended to imply the necessity of establishing precisely equal electoral districts among the boroughs themselves. The preponderance which would then be given to the large towns (the metropolis alone being entitled in ratio of population to 75 Members) may be deemed a very good reason for not at present adopting the principle in full. It may, however, be remarked that the dread of this result giving too much weight to one interest is exaggerated; for when a city becomes so enormous as London, its component parts cease to have any common interest. But in so far as the constituencies of the great towns are enlarged, those of the smaller towns will be proportionably diminished, so that in regard to them it may be reasonable to take only 20,000 inhabitants—or about 1,500 voters after the franchise is lowered—as the general proportion entitled to return one Member. And this result may be very easily attained, in most instances, by grouping, as is done in Wales and Scotland, in which last the constituencies produced by the aggregation of towns, with from 15 to 600 voters each, average in general about 1,500 electors. This system is found to work well in all respects. There has never been

a charge of bribery in any election in Scotland since the Reform Act, save in the case of one single group; and practically the evil is unknown. This peculiarity is indeed not solely to be attributed to the grouping system, for it is perhaps still more distinctly due to the sounder public opinion engendered, among both the voters and the non-voters, by the more general diffusion of education; but it at least shows that grouped boroughs may be expected to become free from the stain of corruption as education makes way. The contests are not, as a rule, more expensive than in single constituencies. And great advantage follows from the extinction of both local influence and petty local feeling, through the combination of towns more apt to be rivals than partners in merely personal objects. Thus even in Conservative counties the boroughs, small as they are numerically, return Liberals without exception. And the representatives selected are very often of high ability, though with no local influence whatsoever. There have been numerous instances since 1832, in which a perfect stranger (in two cases an English landowner) has obtained a seat for a Scottish district of burghs, preferred before candidates with larger local connexion, but whose politics or capacities were less acceptable to the general body of the electors. Thus also Mr. Caird, the first tenant farmer who sat in the House of Commons, was elected, not by a county, but by the Stirling district of boroughs, though personally in no way connected with that part of the country.[1]

[1] Seeking only to discuss principles, and not attempting to sketch a Reform Bill in its details, I have confined, for the sake of simplicity, the illustrations in the text to England and Wales only. But it need not be remarked that a just application of the principles would demand that Scotland and Ireland should be simultaneously taken into account, and that their

I have now refuted one by one the arguments generally adduced in favour of small separate boroughs, and I have shown by what arrangements and with what results they might be extinguished or combined, so as to make independent constituencies. In dealing with these topics, occasion has arisen for incidentally remarking on the prevalent evils which belong to our present system. But since it is so much the fashion, among unwilling Reformers, to insist that seats should be taken from small boroughs only in so far as absolutely necessary to satisfy the demands of the largest of our now unrepresented towns, it may be well, in concluding, to point out specifically the reasons that demand the absolute extinction of such minute constituencies, not merely because of their uselessness, and of their absorbing a representation due to others, but because of their peculiar evils, and their injurious influence on our national life.

Even when we assume the constituency which is comprised in a small town to be independent of external influence, it is far from being a favourable example of the national mind. The fact is almost proverbially recognised, that the society of such places is occupied with the pettiest cares, and, most frequently, with mere personal gossip. It is more concerned with its own circle than with the great men of the nation; more interested in some point of local improvement or taxation than with the affairs of the commonwealth. But what the "society," *i. e.* the professional and independent persons, of such places are occupied with, has, of course,

representation should be equalized with that of England, not indeed in ratio of population, but in ratio of probable number of electors under the extended franchise.

still more attraction for the small tradesmen and the labourers, who happen to have a qualification. All the influences which in large towns tend to withdraw these from the thought of their individual interests, and to lift them to the consideration of imperial questions, are absent in the small towns. Where everybody knows everybody else, and all the private affairs of everybody else, it is inevitable that private scandal should be more interesting than the affairs of State. Where there is no circulation for a well-conducted newspaper, no audience for a series of good lectures, no chance of a meeting at which leading public men will be present, there is really no counteracting influence to operate towards the enlargement of the mind, or the purification of the sense of public morality. In these circumstances, the elevation to the rank of a borough returning a Member to Parliament only augments the evil. It gives to every local jealousy and every social division something to fight about. It gives to every local job an additional chance of success, and inspires its abettors with double fervour. It offers a prize of victory to the local parties, quite irrespective of any public questions. Only by grouping such a small town with several others, that have different local divisions and objects, each thus neutralizing the others, is there any chance that public questions shall really be taken into consideration in elections at all.

The tendency of all such small separate boroughs is, moreover, to deteriorate rather than to improve. A very small constituency must always have a proclivity towards bribery. Public opinion, which is the safeguard against that crime, is liable in such circumstances to be seriously affected by a very moderate number of renegades to

principle. Where there are but a few hundred electors, there is a possibility of bribing a considerable proportion, and there is the motive that such a proportion may turn the election. But if a considerable proportion feel disposed to take bribes, they feel themselves strong enough to stand by each other, and to defy the reprobation of their more upright fellows. The thin end of bribery is thus constantly liable to be introduced, and, when once introduced, the whole wedge of corruption presently follows. This, again, is to be obviated only by making the constituencies so large and wide-spread that, in general, bribery, except on an impracticable scale, shall be unavailing.

Thus far of boroughs which profess to be independent of external influence. But worse is the operation of those which are subject to such influence. Then the whole system becomes a degrading lie. Men vote not as they think, but as they are ordered. They hear speeches from candidates addressed to their judgment, and they know they are forbidden to judge of them according to their consciences. They profess to be swayed by regard to the Constitution, and the interests of the State, and they know that they are swayed only by the compulsion of their landlord or chief customers. To adopt such means of procuring representatives of the public opinion of England in her great Council, is to take the foul matter of a cancer, and inoculate with it the yet healthy parts of the body. Infinite degradation only can follow from so gross, so avowed public immorality.

For these reasons, whoever wishes well to the moral and social progress of the country must earnestly urge the entire abrogation of the system of small consti-

tuencies. It is not that individuals in such constituencies are worse than their neighbours, but that they are placed in circumstances more trying to their intelligence and virtue. By amalgamating them with others we shall apply a counteracting influence to these circumstances; while at the same time we shall gain a true representation of the prevalent currents of English feeling in the various districts of the country. We shall substitute regard for public affairs in the room of petty jealousies and petty interests, we shall by degrees purge out the taint of bribery, and subdue the fatal influence of intimidation. In so doing, while we gain so much, we shall lose nothing, for we shall have constituencies more ready than now to recognise public merit, and sufficiently diversified in character to afford room for every variety of intelligence, information, and practical ability.

NOTE.

Although the grossness of the inequalities in the borough representation is so well known that it would be superfluous to press them in argument, it may be worth while to add a few figures recalling their character.

The following boroughs have less than 5,000 inhabitants each, according to the Census of 1861, and the number of voters is that given, in the returns of last year, for 1864-5 :—

	Population.	Voters.	Members.
Marlborough	4,893	275	2
Northallerton	4,755	442	1
Evesham	4,680	337	2
Wells	4,648	274	2
Dartmouth	4,444	282	1
Thetford	4,208	224	2
Totnes	4,001	382	2
Honiton	3,301	267	2
Lyme Regis	3,215	250	1
Ashburton	3,062	350	1
Arundel	2,498	174	1
Totals	43,705	3,257	17

The following have from 5,000 to 6,000 inhabitants :—

	Voters.	Members.		Voters.	Members.
Tewkesbury	325	2	Calne	174	1
Abingdon	304	1	Lymington	347	2
Leominster	367	2	Launceston	371	1
Petersfield	296	1	Richmond	316	2
Brecknock	281	1	Harwich	386	2
Andover	255	2			
Knaresborough	272	2	Totals	4,074	20
Thirsk	380	1			

Then there are 17 boroughs, with populations between 6,000 and 7,000, returning 28 members; and 12 between 7,000 and 8,000, returning 18 members. In all, 53 boroughs, with a population of 314,005, returning 83 members, or about one member to each 3,800 of population, more than ten times the proportion in all the rest of England. The single boroughs of Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, Finsbury, Tower Hamlets, and Marylebone have each a larger population than the whole of these boroughs put together, yet have each only two members. Tower Hamlets, with 34,115 voters, has but the same representation as Thetford with 224; so that each elector in the latter counts as equal in power to 152 electors in the former. The 11 boroughs with less than 5,000 population each, can outvote the whole of the metropolis, with Liverpool and Manchester added, for these have but 16 members, though the population is 2,638,978 against 43,705, and the value of the property assessed to income-tax is 2,903,873*l.* against 13,402*l.*

VII.

THE ANALYSIS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, OR INDIRECT REPRESENTATION.

BY BERNARD CRACROFT.

An analysis of the House of Commons, as it actually is, appeared a not unnatural point of departure in a general discussion of the question of Reform. To political readers familiar with division lists the title itself of this chapter would perhaps carry a sufficient meaning. Yet something more is here implied than an analysis of parliamentary votes; and as this volume is, I believe, addressed to a larger public, a few preliminaries may not be amiss. By an analysis of the House of Commons, the analysis of the House itself as an electoral result of a particular electoral system is here intended. But it requires little reflection to perceive that such an analysis, however conscientiously attempted, and however laboriously pursued, can at best only be suggestive. To fix the political or any other complexion of six hundred and sixty human beings, who may and do vary, is a task which can never very exhaustively be fulfilled. Even that most tenacious and most conservative of all tenacious and conservative political institutions, the

British Parliament, is scarcely an exception to the rule. I therefore ask such indulgence in the progress of my undertaking as may seem to belong to the subject undertaken.

Like everything else, the House of Commons may be analysed in a variety of ways. It may, for instance, be analysed into Liberals and Conservatives, into Protectionists and Freetraders, into Churchmen and Dissenters, into Reformers and Anti-reformers. But these familiar distinctions are subordinate to more general views of the House of Commons in its representative character.

Taking a wider circle, perhaps the most general division which arises on a first glance at the subject, is of the Commons indoors, so to speak, and the Commons out-of-doors; and this again implies a classification of Members within, and a classification of constituencies without. This division, rough and idle as it might appear, has one recommendation. It touches immediately the whole question of direct and indirect representation. And the distinction between direct and indirect representation is the key to the whole question of Reform.

In an assembly of delegates an analysis of the delegates themselves would be unnecessary, because an analysis of the constituencies by whom they were delegated would exhaust the subject. The personality of each delegate would disappear, or disappear politically, behind the direct power and voice of his constituency, and any consideration of that personality would be a matter of speculative curiosity, not of political interest. But, in the English House of Commons, a Member not being a delegate, but a representative whose freedom is

only limited by certain considerations, we have to take into account both the Member himself within the House, and such influence as his constituency may or might be able to exercise upon him from without. The constituencies have been discussed in another essay. The present essay is chiefly concerned with the Members themselves—with the Commons indoors rather than with the Commons out-of-doors; and the end proposed is to show what manner of House it is, take it all in all, which is elected under the present elective system; and, being elected, what are the broad representative results of their election. It is true the constituencies cannot be kept entirely out of sight, but they will be alluded to only so far as may enable the reader to appreciate the full reasons for the stress laid upon the distinction between direct and indirect representation, between voting power at the polling-booth and representative power in Parliament. It is not too much to say that nine-tenths of the confusion, nine-tenths of the hostility, involved in the controversies which have grown round Reform, have arisen through losing sight of this fundamental distinction. The arch and keystone of the whole subject will be found there.

To take a salient but not by any means a solitary example. The insurance offices have no direct representation in Parliament at all. They do not figure in the Reform Bill. They are not boroughs, they are not counties. At the polling-booth their voting power is nothing. But in the House itself, partly owing to the high character and great intelligence of their conductors, partly owing to their prodigious wealth, and partly owing to the enormous interests with which they blend,

they are most heavily represented. Between fifty and sixty Members of Parliament are directors of insurance companies; and when Mr. Sheridan, the recognised leader of this influential phalanx, rises in his place to plead for the remission of the Fire Duty, or expound any other grievance connected with those offices, his statements are listened to, quite independently of himself, with an attention and a care conceded to one who speaks not only with knowledge and authority, but with a certain well-understood if undefined power at his back. Constitutionally viewed, the representation of the insurance offices in Parliament is unrecognised and indirect. It is fortuitous, masonic. Practically it is none the less powerful. There it is, a positive result of an electoral system which knows nothing of insurance offices.

Here, then, is one example, which proves the necessity of bearing in mind the fundamental distinction between direct and indirect representation. Let us take one more preliminary example, though of a different kind. The aristocracy and the landowners are overwhelmingly represented not only in the House of Lords, but in the House of Commons. A stranger might ask how and by what means. The answer would be, certainly not in virtue of their own voting power at the polling-booth. That is *nil*. Certainly not by virtue of any legal enactment in their favour. The Constitution recognises Crown, Lords, and Commons; but the Lords alone have their seats secured to them in the House of Lords by the Constitution. There is no law compelling the constituencies to return any particular class of men to the House of Commons. The property qualification has been abolished. How, then, do members get there; and when there, how is their

representation of those who sent them there to be measured and defined? The answer in the case of the aristocracy is evident. They get there not by direct but by indirect influence—by the power, in short, of their prodigious antecedent advantages, by their irredeemable start in the race for power. When there, they represent, *directly* their constituencies, *indirectly* themselves; yet, from the very nature of things, in such a manner that the indirect representation throws, and must necessarily throw, the direct representation into the shade. It is in the nature of things that a man's self should be nearer to him than his constituency. There is a homely saying, that a man's skin sits closer to him than his shirt. And, without any imputation on their good faith, so it is with Members of Parliament. Single individuals are no doubt capable of preferring the interests of others to their own. Single Members of Parliament, with personal interests of their own, may prefer public to private considerations. But, in the case of classes dealing with class interests, it is the law of their being that they should consider themselves paramount and necessary to the public welfare. Thus an individual landowner may be indifferent to the claims of land, and vote against them where he thinks it right; but a class of landowners, whomsoever else they represent, will have a tendency first to represent themselves. That tendency may be checked, controlled, overruled—it sometimes is—but it is always there.

Such a tendency is not peculiar to landowners. It happens, however, that, in this country, a concurrence of causes has given greater solidarity to their order, and greater solidity to their power, than to any other class

in the community. Not only have they the natural tendency of all orders and classes in all countries and times, when they can, to represent themselves, but it might almost be said that in this country they cannot help representing themselves. So vast is their traditional power, so broadly does it sit over the land, so deep and ancient are its roots, so multiplied and ramified everywhere are its tendrils, and creepers, and feelers, that the danger is never lest they should have too little, but always lest they should have too much power, and so, even involuntarily, choke down the possibilities of new life from below. Whether they sit for rural or oppidan constituencies, whether their politics are Radical, Liberal, or Conservative, whether they represent Trade, Manufacture, or Agriculture, they belong to an order external to all three. They find that order encamped in large forces in the House on both sides. They have a common freemasonry of blood, a common education, common pursuits, common ideas, a common dialect, a common religion, and—what more than any other thing binds men together—a common prestige, a prestige growled at occasionally, but on the whole conceded, and even, it must be owned, secretly liked by the country at large. All these elements, obvious in themselves, but difficult to measure and gauge, go to make up that truly and without exaggeration tremendous consent of power, often latent, often disguised, never absent, which constitutes the indirect representation of the aristocracy in the House of Commons.

This, then, is another example of indirect representation. It differs, however, from that of the insurance offices. There we have the case of a number of men

returned by all manner of constituencies to represent all manner of interests, who, once returned, happen to answer the purposes of *another* representation,—a representation probably never intended or even considered by those who returned them. Material interests alone are indirectly represented in behalf of the insurance offices. No question of class feeling or class sentiment is there involved. But in the case of a member of the upper classes sitting in Parliament to represent the interests of lower classes, we have to consider his direct representation of the interests intrusted to him, and then his indirect or spontaneous and unconscious representation of himself—that is to say, of the general sentiments, feelings, views, and also (for they cannot be omitted) material interests of his own class, that class among whom he lives, moves, and has (in many more senses than one for the purposes of this analysis), "his being."

These instances of indirect representation are only two out of the vast number which belong to the time-honoured anomalies of our system, but it is enough if at first starting they enable the reader fully to realize the importance in any discussion on Reform of keeping in view the distinction between voting power at the polling-booth, and representative power inside the House. With a view however to carry those readers with me a step further, who may think that they already see an answer to the arguments which these instances may foreshadow, I will ask them to give full weight to one more preliminary observation. It is this: If the argument so well known in the present day as the "swamping argument" could have any application at all to English

affairs, those who rely upon it should consider this fact. All the constituencies are swamped already, as it is! Numbers already prevail there. Land, wealth, intelligence, are already outvoted at the polling-booth. Yet so little are they outvoted in the House of Commons, that they sit there alone, and the only question really at stake is, whether, under such a constitution as ours is, numbers as such can ever be heard there at all.

This brings me to the first branch of the analysis in view:—direct representation, and its broadest division, population and land. How is population, merely as population, in the bald arithmetical sense of mere numbers, represented in the House? How is land represented? At first sight, and on a superficial view, the answer appears decisive and unqualified. Numbers are, it might be said, overwhelmingly represented there. Land not at all, or scarcely in any decent ratio. Looking at the United Kingdom as a whole, and dividing it broadly into boroughs and counties, we find that a population of eighteen million souls in the counties have only 256 Members in the House of Commons, whereas a population of eleven millions in boroughs have 396 Members.

Here then is a very striking aspect of the House of Commons. It is divided into two broad sections of, say, 400 and 250 Members. The 250 Members represent land, the 400 Members seem to represent population unconnected with land; and, by an application of the compound rule of three it may be shown that population as against land is represented in the advantageous ratio of more than *two to one*.

I dwell upon this, because it is one of those salient

facts peculiarly likely to impress the imagination of a practical people, and peculiarly adapted to shut out the light of any more recondite arguments, however conclusive, on the other side. Doctor Johnson, stamping his foot on the ground to shake down the Berkeleyan cobwebs, was not more confident of the strength of his position than the practical Tory, who sets his foot on this great fact and proclaims that land is grossly unrepresented. Yet "this great fact" is wholly delusive. It is honeycombed by a thousand underground channels. True it is, that in the apparent result the boroughs have 396 Members, the counties 256.[1] But let us see how this gross result is "redressed" in minute detail.

And first, of these 396 borough Members a couple of hundred Members, at least, belong to what is called technically the territorial class. The House may be roughly divided into landowners, with their relatives (including of course the aristocracy there), and mercantile Members. Those Members who belong to neither class are so few, that they may for the present purpose be neglected. The "Financial Reform Almanack," great and most admirable in compilation, sets down the representatives of the mercantile, manufacturing, and shipowning interest in the House at eighty-four. I have gone over the same ground in Dod's "New Parliament" with the greatest care. But with the utmost diligence, and the help of the "Joint Stock Companies' Directory," and every other source of information I could obtain, I cannot discover that the mercantile, manufacturing, and

[1] The six University Members are left out. They add to the indirect representation of the landed interest.

shipping interests, including also owners of collieries, have more than 122 Members in the House. Of these four or five sit for counties. Then there are in the House 78 bankers or bank directors, but many of these are either landowners themselves or connected with peers or landowners. Of those who remain, many already figure in the list of merchants. On the whole, the list of Members who are merchants or bankers, or both, and nothing else, may fairly be taken at considerably under 150. And this leaves out of view the possibility and probability of their also being landowners, though not known as such to the public. Deducting these from the 396 borough Members, there remain 246 borough Members, who are almost to a man landowners, or connected with landowning interests. If we add 246 to 256 we get 502 as the ascertained number of the territorialists in the House of Commons. The number is probably much larger; but, as a curious confirmation of a result for which, without a personal knowledge of each individual in the House, it would be impossible to vouch, the number of Public School men and University men given in Dod is, as far as I could count them,[1] 429, and, as the list of the remaining 229 comprises some sixty or seventy names belonging to the aristocratic element, additional light is thrown upon the calculation.

As a general result, I fearlessly challenge the reader to test my assertion, that not less than 500 Members in the House of Commons are either county Members, or, if representing boroughs, either peers or relations of peers, or landowners or under landowners' influence.

[1] They may be more. They are not less.

In other words, land, which at first sight appears to have only 256 Members in the House, has, in reality and for practical uses too, some 500 Members, and more, who get there by hook or by crook, men of the same ideas and feelings and bias—men who, in spite of every superficial political difference of opinion, belong, so to speak, to one vast cousinhood. And this is one aspect under which we begin to see how the representation of mere numbers, so powerful on paper, is in practice neutralized.

But that is not all. There are many other checks besides. Six hundred thousand persons in the Tower Hamlets have two Members in the House. But then six thousand persons at Bodmin have two Members also, so that one man at Bodmin politically outweighs ninety-nine in the Tower Hamlets. Again, four hundred thousand persons in Liverpool have two Members allotted to them, while four thousand persons at Thetford also have two Members, and thus one man at Thetford outweighs ninety-nine at Liverpool. And so on, all the way up one-half the boroughs, and all the way down the other half.

Or look at it again in another light. Eleven boroughs, with a total population of forty-four thousand persons in round numbers, return seventeen Members. These eleven boroughs are Wells, Totnes, Thetford, Northallerton, Marlborough, Lyme Regis, Honiton, Evesham, Dartmouth, Ashburton, Arundel. The gross estimated rental of these towns amounts in the aggregate to no more than 200,000*l.*, a sum less than the income of one or two of the great English landowners. According to Dod, whose statements, I hope, may be used without discourtesy, they be-

long respectively—belonged in 1852[1]—to the Dean and Chapter of Wells, the Duke of Cleveland, the Duke of Grafton and Lord Ashburton, Miss Pierse of Bedale Hall and Lord Ailesbury, Mr. Attwood, Mr. Joseph Locke and Viscount Courtenay, Lord Northwick and Mr. Rudge, Lord Clinton, the Seales of Mount Boone, and the Duke of Norfolk. At the last general election they returned Mr. Jolliffe, eldest son of Sir William Jolliffe, son-in-law of Lord Enfield, and Captain Hayter, son of the late "whip;" Mr. Pender (unseated), a Manchester manufacturer, and Mr. Alfred Seymour, a member of Brooks's; Mr. John Harvey and the Hon. Alexander Baring, the former brother-in-law of the eighth Earl of Cavan, the latter son-in-law of the sixth Earl of Cardigan; Mr. Charles Mills, London banker, son-in-law of the third Earl of Harewood; Lord Ernest Bruce and Mr. Henry Baring; Mr. Treeby, "opposed to rash innovations;" Mr. Frederick Goldsmid, supposed to have property in or near Honiton, and Mr. Baillie Cochrane, great-grandson-in-law of the fifth Duke of Rutland; Mr. James Bourne and Mr. Edward Holland—one the squire of Hackinsall, the other a former county Member; Mr. John Hardy, brother of the Right Hon. Gathorne Hardy; Mr. Jardine, a London merchant, of the firm of Matheson and Co.; and, finally, Lord Edward Howard, the well-known representative of the English Catholics.

The SEVENTEEN Members above-mentioned represent eleven boroughs whose joint population is that of a big parish (about half that of Kensington, for instance, which has not even ONE Member), and whose whole real pro-

[1] Mr. Dod's "Electoral Facts," the only book of reference on this subject, was last published in 1852.

perty falls short of a great English fortune. On the other hand, Birmingham, Finsbury, Lambeth, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Marylebone, Tower Hamlets, Westminster, have only eighteen Members to represent a population of 3,300,000, and a gross estimated rental of 24,300,000*l.*

It has been much the fashion until perhaps recently to decry the Members of great constituencies. But the Members for these, the nine largest boroughs in England and Wales, will bear comparison for parliamentary reputation with any other eighteen Members chosen at random from great or small boroughs on both sides of the House. They are Mr. Scholefield, Mr. Bright, Mr. Torrens, Mr. Lusk, Mr. Hughes, Mr. Doulton, Mr. Beecroft, Mr. Baines, Mr. Horsfall, Mr. Graves, Mr. Bazley, Mr. James, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Chambers, Mr. Butler, Mr. Ayrton, the Hon. R. Grosvenor, and last, not quite least perhaps, Mr. Stuart Mill. That is to say, at least half of the Members for the nine largest boroughs have parliamentary reputations in the country. If it is said that I am travelling over old ground, that these facts have long been admitted, that it is admitted numbers are not represented as such in the House of Commons, nor is it intended they should be, I can only reply that I am not arguing here whether numbers should or should not have a voice in Parliament, but attempting to unravel the actual facts. The conclusions will be stated presently.

What we have arrived at now is this, that the great fact of the boroughs having 396 borough Members for 11,000,000 souls, and the counties having only 256 Members to represent 18,000,000,—that this wonderful

fact, which is the main argument for giving the counties more Members, means really nothing at all. Bearing in mind the distinction between direct and indirect representation, the point to look at is not how many Members sit for counties, but how many Members of the so-called county class get into the House altogether, for counties and for boroughs.

It does not matter, for instance, how a sugar merchant gets into the House, if he gets there. When there, he is there, and he represents sugar, with other sugar merchants, or against them, as the case may be. The upshot is, that sugar is "represented." For let it be observed here once for all—and I particularly beg the attention of the reader to this point—representation is independent of mere difference of opinion. I have excluded delegation, and the whole of this analysis and any conclusions I may endeavour to draw from it are founded upon the hypothesis of representation. Now sugar, for instance, is equally *represented* by the East India sugar merchants and by the West India sugar merchants in Parliament, whether they sit for this place or for that, and whether they agree in opinion or disagree. Representation, if the word is to have any meaning of its own beyond delegation, must include the representation of differences as well as agreements of opinion. Thus Liverpool merchants and London merchants differ widely in opinion. But trade is "represented" in the House both by the Liverpool merchant and by the London merchant who happen to be there.

In the same way county Members represent land, and the feelings, opinions, and traditions of the landed class, including all their differences. A and B are cousins,

landowners, county Members. Both are Etonians, both Oxonians, both Guardsmen, both have married daughters of peers. But one is a member of the Carlton, the other of Brooks's. One is a Protectionist, the other a Freetrader. One hugs primogeniture, the other thinks it better that land should be as saleable as a watch. One is an enthusiastic defender of the Protestant faith in Ireland, the other thinks that the Irish Church would be best swept off the face of the earth. One hates America and all that is American, drawing all his arguments from New York; the other shrugs his shoulders, says the Americans are the kindest people in the world, and points with a landowner's pride to the conduct of the Western farmers during the late war. Here are differences enough in all conscience. No doubt, too, one man belongs to a majority, the other to a minority, in their common class. But who can doubt that each in his own way, and in the main, represents that class to which he belongs, that he shares its more general likes and dislikes, its horizons and planes of thought and sentiment, its secret affinities and secret repulsions, its vistas of progress, its blank walls of obstruction. What he does not represent — and represented still less before the Reform Bill—is the mercantile feeling and fever; the ardent faith in progress, the belief, often delusive, in a mercantile millennium, to be obtained, partly by the boundless development of human energy striving like fire ever upwards, partly by unforeseen, but probable discoveries, which at any moment may throw additional millions into the lap of human comfort, and so raise humanity another stage above the gulf of wretchedness and want.

The landowner's creed, pure and simple, is the creed of calm and long possession. "He that is wretched, let him be wretched still,"—Heaven's decree, who made man and the worm. It has the dignity of repose and the serenity of the everlasting landscape. It abhors disturbance and all that is new. It is thrifty, as not being used to windfalls; niggardly, as being accustomed to small losses. It is tenacious, to idolatry, of its power, and for that will sell all that it has, and the education of the poor. It believes there is nothing new under the sun, and openly or secretly sneers at the wildness and vulgarity of progress. Repose is its ideal in things and men—the essence of its behaviour and nobility. It thinks "aims" but forms of vulgarity, for every aim is a confession of inferiority. He who is "THERE," need go no further: to aim is to confess to something beyond. It aims no higher, condescends no lower. And so, in a thousand forms, the root of all vulgarity and snobbishness, in the landowner's definition of vulgarity and snobbishness, is the absence of repose—fuss: fuss of good manners, fuss of gentility, fuss of kindness, fuss of hostility, fuss of disquisition, fuss of energy, fuss of haste, fuss of eagerness. Nature, he thinks, cow-footed, stands for ever; even railways will pass away.

But if trade does not represent land, nor land trade, still less does either represent labour. Land is represented in Parliament up to the eyes; trade can make its voice felt, as in the matter of Protection. But there is one other fact to be considered, most important for the purposes of this analysis. Trade, since the abolition of the Corn Laws, has tended more and more to coalesce and blend with Land, and the landed interest. The

reason is plain: the bulk of English merchants and mercantile men are also in different degrees landowners. Protection was the only wall of separation between land and trade. That wall removed, the material interests of the two classes have become, and tend to become, every day more indissolubly connected and inseparably blended. Half the peerage have mercantile and manufacturing interests. The mercantile interest is itself a hierarchy in which the little shopman looks up with not unfounded hope to the position of the merchant, while the merchant in his turn generally has one ambition at heart, to found a county family. The landowners on their part are often on the look-out for heiresses. Thus the fusion of the two interests is becoming daily more and more complete. The result is, that Parliament is, and tends in this country more and more to become, a Parliament of land and trade, not labour; of employers, not of employed; of officers, not soldiers; of admirals, not sailors; of railway directors, rather than railway travellers.

In dealing with the landed interest, as compared with the mercantile, it has been found necessary to argue in some degree hypothetically. It is almost impossible without personal inquiry to find out, within a large debateable margin, who is, and who is not, possessed of a landed estate. But in the matter of the aristocratic interest inside the House of Commons, Dod's "Parliamentary Guide" furnishes the materials for a very adequate analysis. According then to Dod, in the Parliament of August, 1865, there were returned 71 baronets, 11 elder sons of baronets, 19 younger sons of baronets, and 8 grandsons of baronets; a total for the baronetage alone

of 110. There were also 37 peers, or elder sons of peers, 64 younger sons of peers, and 15 grandsons of peers; a total of 116 Members of Parliament for the peerage, and for the peerage and baronetage together a total of 226. Besides these there are one hundred Commoners sitting in Parliament who are connected with the peerage by marriage or descent. The aristocratic class, or element, in the House of Commons has therefore a grand total of, at least, 326 Members. And, unquestionably, this number would be found, if an exhaustive search were made among other sources of information, to be below the mark. When it is remembered that in the fullest House on record, namely, on the 28th of April, 1866, those who voted in the majority had only 320 votes, the number 326, as the symbol of caste in the House of Commons, is significant.

But even leaving out of view the remaining 120 or 130 Members who substantially belong to the same class, there are one or two more calculations, which confirm the results obtained in this branch of the analysis. The existence of 326 Members representing one class in the House is only one view of the case. These men are not mere separate units, like insurance office directors; they are not a mere Venetian set of a few families, but, to repeat an expression already used, one vast cousinhood. It was lately said of Lord Granville, that he represents the "cousins in Parliament." If he does, he may be congratulated on his political power, for "the cousins" mean simply three-fourths of the House of Commons, and the connexion of those three-fourths not only with one another, but with the House of Lords.

There are in the House of Commons 79 Members who

represent the alliance between peer and peer, 53 who represent an alliance between a peer and a baronet, and 23 between baronet and baronet. Or taking another view—117 Members in the House represent *one* peerage by marriage or descent, 67 members represent *two* peerages, 18 represent *three* peerages. Nor is this confined to the aristocratic element. Some time ago an ex-governor of the Bank of England in the House of Commons told one of the profoundest political writers of the day, that he himself was related to thirty other Members of Parliament, all sitting with him at that time. And this view gives us an insight into the extraordinary political *solidarity* of the upper classes. The parliamentary frame is kneaded together almost out of one class; it has the strength of a giant and the compactness of a dwarf. For in this respect one Parliament is very much like another.

Again—and this consideration deserves the utmost attention—there is in this country a distinct parliamentary class, which numbers at the outside some three or four thousand names. The total number of candidates since 1832 is hardly over four thousand; and if you look down the list of polls since 1832 in Acland's "Imperial Poll Book," the same names recur again and again, not only as successful Members, but as unsuccessful candidates. Each constituency seems to be laid siege to by a given number of men, who appear to remain round it in expectancy, year after year, for five, ten, twenty years. This class belongs to the upper ten thousand, and spends its life in following the tide of public opinion in the constituencies, and taking advantage of every new turn in the tide. The Reform Bill made vast changes in the

legislation of the House of Commons, but, as Lord Russell then prophesied, it has left class ascendancy quite untouched. Perhaps the number of new men is increased by two or three score. Perhaps the men who are now returned to Parliament are on the average older men, sedater politicians, greater worshippers of the respectabilities. Perhaps the result has been to increase what it is difficult to describe otherwise than as political Philistinism, especially on the Liberal side,—for there is no Philistine like your respectable and wary Liberal Philistine, with his old party watch-words and old party Shibboleths, which he follows in a narrow groove, afraid to look either to the right or to the left. But on the whole the centre of gravity of political power is just where it was before the Reform Bill—far above the belt, nor is it likely that any extension of the suffrage or any redistribution of power will place it elsewhere. Under any Reform Bill, the same classes who wield political power now will continue to wield it. The real difference will be that as the constituencies change, so will those who study their favour, and they will take problems, social and political, into consideration which they hitherto ignored.

To return to the analysis.

I have endeavoured to show that the representatives of the landed class in the House of Commons number about five-sevenths of the whole, and the mercantile element about two-sevenths. Let me add one detail to show that not only is population not represented in the House, but that in Parliamentary Divisions upon subjects which affect numbers directly and property not at all, numbers are ignored. Two examples may suffice. In the division on the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill, on March 2d, 1866,

156 Members voted for the second reading, 176 against, —adverse majority in Parliament, 20. But the electors who returned the Ayes were 347,733, and the electors who returned the Noes were 294,715; so that the electoral majority in favour of the Bill was 68,018. Yet the question whether or not a man may marry his sister-in-law is one which affects the million quite as much as the upper ten thousand.

Again, in the division on the Flogging Bill, in 1864, there was a parliamentary majority for the Bill of 2, and an electoral majority against the Bill of 90,540.[1] Yet this is certainly a point on which, under a Government which professes to be not paternal or despotic, but constitutional, numbers should have a voice. If officers may have an opinion as to what punishment befits a gentleman, are the lower classes not to have an opinion as to what punishment they consider appropriate to an offence committed by members of their own class? To deny it, would be to show a deficiency in that English and popular constitutional feeling without which no man in this country can be a really great statesman.

Numbers, then, as such are not at all represented in the House of Commons—rather the reverse. Nor are the working men represented as working men. Immense stress was laid on the fact that they possess 25 per cent. of the votes at the polling-booth, or 128,603 of the borough votes in England and Wales. But how are these votes distributed? Fifteen seaport towns absorb 21,774. These are Bristol, Liverpool, Southampton, Birkenhead, Brighton, Devonport, Portsmouth, Chatham, Hull, Dover, Hastings, Pembroke, Cardiff,

[1] The latter result is taken from Acland's "Imperial Poll Book."

Sunderland, Scarborough. And who are their Members? A highly interesting group. Mr. Henry Berkeley and Sir Morton Peto, Mr. Horsfall and Mr. Graves, Mr. Gurney and Mr. Moffatt, Mr. Laird, Mr. White and Mr. Fawcett. I shall not trouble the reader with the whole list of the 26 Members. He will find it in the Appendix. I will only point out that only one among them really represents the working man in the sense of understanding and expressing his peculiar political views and tenets. That is Mr. Fawcett. Then there are the 8 Metropolitan districts, which absorb 40,448 working men, and here again, out of 18 Members, the working man only gets one representative, Mr. Hughes. Besides these, there are 9 boroughs which absorb 20,726 more of the celebrated 25 per cent. without much rhyme,—namely, Norwich, York, Oxford (of all places), Leicester,—and with more reason, Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Sheffield, Nottingham, and Manchester. They returned, in 1865, Mr. James and Mr. Bazley, Mr. Bright and Mr. Scholefield, Mr. Morley and Sir Robert Clifton, Mr. Roebuck and Mr. Hadfield, Mr. Harris and Mr. Taylor, &c. &c. not one of them, not even Mr. Bright, being in any true sense a working man's Member. Thus, then, 82,948 out of the 128,000 working men on the register are already spent upon 32 boroughs, leaving an average of 271 working men for each of the remaining 168 English and Welsh borough constituencies, without any further result than to give them as a grand total, 2 out of 334 Members. And I have not yet alluded to 6 of the 8 boroughs in which they have an actual majority, and upon which Mr. Dudley Baxter, in his ingenious pamphlet, laid so much stress. The 8 boroughs are Coventry, Stafford, Maldon,

Newcastle-under-Lyne, Pembroke, Beverley, Greenwich, and St. Ives. And here is the full list of the Members they returned in 1865. Mr. Eaton, of London, a silk merchant, and Conservative; Mr. Treherne, a barrister, and Conservative; Mr. Meller, a Conservative; Mr. Sandford, a Tory; Mr. Earle, a Conservative; Mr. Buckley, a near relative of a former Member for the same constituency, and a Conservative; Mr. Edwards, a Conservative; Mr. Sykes, a Conservative; Mr. Paull, a Conservative. The remaining 5 Members are Liberals:—Mr. Arthur Bass, a Cambridge man; Mr. Allen, an Oxonian; Sir Hugh Owen, Alderman Salomons, and Sir Charles Bright. Nine Conservatives out of 14 Members are returned by the only constituencies in which the working men have an actual majority. Nor is there anything distinctive in the class from which those Members are chosen. They are much what any other 14 Members might be who were chosen by any other 8 boroughs.

The working classes, then, who have 128,000 votes at the polling-booth, and an actual majority in the election of 14 Members, have in the House 2 real Members of their own. The railways, which have hardly any votes at the polling-booth, or hardly any they could utilize if they would, have 179 railway directors in the House of Commons, who represent railway shareholders, not railway travellers. The bankers have 78 bankers and bank directors in the House, the insurance offices 53. There appear from Dod to be only 12 brewers in the House, but it is quite certain that the latent brewing element in the House is enormous. If the Members were counted who possess all or a large number of the public-houses round the boroughs they

represent, the list would not be small. It is a favourite commonplace with landowners, that the power of land is superior to all other power because it is lasting. This is not quite so universally true as they suppose. A landowner may have enormous political influence, his successor may be a cypher. And there are many combinations which beat land hollow for permanency and efficiency. I will not mention names. But here for instance is a case in point. A is possessed of a large fortune, and has three sons, B, C, D. He makes B a brewer, C a banker, and D a solicitor in the same town. These three men soon monopolise the whole substantial influence in the borough, and their power, like a three-pronged fork, is planted as firmly in the land as if it were part of the soil. All new influences grow round it, and tend to strengthen and establish it, and not even the blunders of those who possess it can shake it.

To proceed, among the 500 landowners, more or less, and the 100 traders, more or less, who compose the House of Commons, are also 179 railway directors, 78 bankers, and 12 brewers. Among the traders, Dod gives 7 ship-owners, 4 East India merchants, 10 iron masters, 7 cotton manufacturers and calico printers, 5 worsted and carpet manufacturers, 2 silk manufacturers.

Again, 58 Members have been in the Guards, and 19 are members of the Guards Club; 54 Members belong to other regiments, and 52 are members of the other military clubs; 48 Members are militiamen, 44 volunteers, and 56 yeomen. The navy would seem to have only 11 Members in the House, but that number must fall short of the truth. Accepting it, the total naval and military element in the House numbers 271.

Turning to the Public Schools and Universities, the number of Etonians in the House appears to be 105. It is probably greater. Harrow has 52 voices to defend it; Rugby, 23; Westminster, who attends the debates herself, is satisfied with 17 spokesmen; Winchester has 9; Shrewsbury, 5; Sandhurst, 5; and Woolwich, 4. The total number of Public School men in the House of Commons is 227, a formidable number whenever a rooted prejudice has to be attacked; and what prejudice is so rooted, so unconscious, so amiable, so defensible as a school prejudice? Oxford may listen to herself out of 136 mouths; Cambridge, out of 110; but Oxford has carried off the Olympian prize, and may claim the λίγυς ἀγορήτης of the age as her own. On the other hand, at the time of the last general election, upon which this analysis is founded (no notice being taken of subsequent changes), Cambridge might claim the ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν of half a century. Among the Oxford men the following names catch the eye:—Acland, Adderley, Baring, Briscoe, Cardwell, Coleridge, Cranbourne, Denison, Ducane, Grant-Duff, Elcho, Enfield, Ewart, Gladstone, Goschen, Grosvenor, Hardy, Hayter, Heathcote, Henley, Hughes, Hunt, Lowe, Lygon, Monsell, Morrison, Neate, Newdegate, Pakington, Palmer, Peel, Simeon, Wood. Among the Cambridge men:—Bass, Beaumont, Beresford Hope, Bouverie, Bruce, Buxton, Cavendish, Childers, Collier, Fawcett, Forsyth, Gibson, Grosvenor, Hamilton, Hartington, Hutt, Kinglake, Locke King, Lefevre, Bulwer Lytton, Manners, Milton, Montagu, Palmerston, Royston, Rothschild, Selwyn, Trevelyan, Urquhart, Walpole. Not bad lists on either side. London University has 7 members in the House; Edinburgh University, 9; Glasgow, 3;

Dublin, 27. Thus the total University element is 292; and, if we add the Public School men, who have not been to the University, the number is about 430 altogether. Yet the list is necessarily incomplete.

So much for the Schools and Universities. It seems curious, but the total number of Dissenters in the House does not appear to exceed 84. It comprises 13 Independents, 1 Baptist, 1 Wesleyan, 12 Unitarians, 1 English Presbyterian, 3 United Presbyterians, 2 Free Churchmen, 4 Quakers, 5 Jews, 2 English Catholics, and 40 Irish Catholics,—a total of 84, which seems incredibly small. But even making it 100 in the dark, that would leave over 550 Anglicans,—a number which tallies curiously with the number of Public School and University men, and the estimated number of landowners.

Again, there are 100 barristers in the House, of whom 24 are Queen's Councillors. 175 Members are magistrates, 235 deputy-lieutenants, and 28 are or have been high-sheriffs.

The Conservative clubs have 249 Members in the House of Commons; the Liberal Clubs, 221; the University Clubs, 82; and the Army and Navy Clubs, 52; or, including the Guards Club, 71. No wonder if the Working Man thinks a good deal of the Clubs.

That the House of Commons comprises several authors among its Members is well known, but few persons would be prepared for the fact that there are in the House no less than some eighty authors and journalists, who have treated of almost every subject that can be written about, from poetry to statistics, from anatomy to volcanoes.

Such then is the House of Commons returned under

the present system, a House of peers and landowners, of merchants and manufacturers, of churchmen, lawyers and officers, of University men and authors—a House than which a more aristocratic assembly, in the true political and technical sense of the word, probably never existed. No Englishman need quarrel with Mr. Lowe for lavishing his admiration on a body of men, which, take it all in all, is one of the greatest marvels in history. But there our agreement stops. Mr. Lowe says, "Touch it, and it will perish." With all deference to so great an authority, I venture to say, "It is imperishable, so long as the country lasts." It is so strong, that it will bear any improvement, and in many respects so admirable, that English statesmen might well be consumed with the desire to make it more admirable still.

The main conclusion at which I am able to arrive, from all the facts and considerations which, I am very sensible, I have most imperfectly stated, is this, that in this country if you had manhood suffrage, with womanhood suffrage thrown into the bargain, you would not and could not have a democracy, for democracy in this country, in Mr. Lowe's sense of democracy, is politically impossible. The arguments drawn even from France are wholly inapplicable to England. The storm which blew over France in 1789, blew down every tree and every bush. It passed over England, and scarcely bush or tree bowed its head. But if arguments from France are inapplicable to English affairs, how much more is this true of Australia and America! The Australians and Americans started, one yesterday, the other the day before yesterday, in the political race. All their units started on a dead level, like drops of quick-

silver on a mahogany table, and for the most part there they are still, on the same dead level. Our political fabric is the living and slow growth of little less than a thousand years. We have passed through the preliminary fire of several conquests; we have been subjected to century upon century of political vicissitudes; our political frame has been slowly tempered and tuned and tried until the whole has settled down into an edifice whose faults are over-massiveness of structure, over-strength, and an over-tenacity so wonderful, that it takes as many years to move a pebble in it, as it takes weeks in the winds and tides to nibble at a rock. The hurricane which blew down the neighbouring pile left our pile erect. Looking at the state of England and its history, its Parliaments present and past, looking at the past and present condition and temper of all classes in the realm, not even overlooking Fenianism and the Fenians, it is difficult to repress a humble amazement when distinguished politicians condescend to compare such a pile with Australia,—Westminster Abbey with a few wooden huts,—and then proceed with a great flourish of elbows to square a Constitution absolutely unique by De Tocqueville's little rules. To say that there is an irresistible tendency towards democracy in every nation, under all circumstances, and in every country, is like the fallacy exploded by Mr. Mill, that truth must always prevail. He took an *argumentum ad homines* to answer it, and addressing himself to the Evangelical party, who held the Waldensian Creed to be truth, he said, "Look at the Waldenses. They were stamped out. Therefore it is idle to say, truth must prevail." And so in politics. You can stamp out an

opinion, or undermine it, or deaden it, or paralyse it, or choke it, or stereotype it. Only you must bring the exact means to bear. And no doubt it might take all the statesmen in a hundred years to find out by what means, *exactly*, a particular opinion could be stereotyped, or choked down, or paralysed, or stamped out. But nature is cleverer than statesmanship. And natural causes will do this, and all this, for any opinions and systems, and for the most contrary opinions and systems under the sun. Natural causes will erect an aristocracy, then undermine it, or establish it for ever. Natural causes will create a democracy, then stamp it out, or leave it to run on. No two nations, no two countries, will arrive at the same results politically at the end of ten centuries, or even one. Of two nations who start from apparently the same antecedents it is quite possible, and quite likely, that one will end as a nation of fervent flunkeys, the other as a nation of jealous levellers. It all depends on how the natural weights and scales are adjusted during the formation of the national character and the growth of the national institutions. The adjustment may lead the national ideas to gravitate upwards, just as well as downwards.

Take the English, as a nation, at home. They are devoured with the idea of "bettering themselves," and that idea with them means "rising in the social scale." "Respectability" is consequently their idol. There are men who say it were better if half the wealth of the country were thrown into the sea. But the men who say so belong to the small class of philanthropic idiots who brought about the French Revolution. The great bulk of the English masses have no such feeling.

No preaching would give it them. They look up to the higher classes as a sort of divine Olympus, beautiful, sacred, above all things *intelligible*, just near enough to be perhaps not quite unattainable by their children, just far enough to lend enchantment to the view. So far from these men being levellers, or potential levellers, if you could dive into their hearts (for what they exactly say with their lips is not the test) you would find what every unconscious indication reveals—that to deprive them of their Olympus would be to deprive them of their earthly heaven and ultimate aspiration. To offer to pull it down for them would fill them with horror, grief, and concern, by offering to deprive them of their only earthly ideal. And these are the men whom you are afraid of admitting to the Constitution, to tell you in your own House, in their own words, where the shoe pinches them, and what they want. And these men, who fought for you in the Spanish Armada, and stood by you at Waterloo, who every morning gather your wealth for you, who would be horrified if you were injured, lest their ideal should be hurt, you accuse of drunkenness and venality, because they want to come up and speak to you themselves, when, as you perfectly well know, thirty years ago you fell drunk under your own tables, night after night, and thought it the proper thing too.

But dismissing the "swamping argument," as in its vaguer form inadmissible, there is one objection which is formidable, but which, I believe, can be met. "Granted," it is said, "that no Reform Bill will democratise the Constitution. Let us put democracy aside. We do not fear that. We do not fear lest the classes at present in political power should cease to be politically powerful.

But if you give the working classes sufficient power at the polling-booth to overcome the obstacles to their being heard in the House of Commons as a class,—

(1) Will you not in a few years have given them a practical majority in all the boroughs?

(2) Will not that imply the *supremacy* of their class in Parliament?

(3) Will you have improved Parliament indoors—that is, the House of Commons?

(4) Will you have improved Parliament out-of-doors—that is, the constituencies?

And first, it is asked, whether, if the working classes have a swamping majority at the polling-booth, they will not ultimately monopolize the boroughs? To this I answer: Yes, probably. But otherwise they will not be heard at all, in Parliament. Now it is admitted on all hands that they ought to be heard in Parliament. Therefore, if it is necessary for that purpose that they should have the boroughs, give them the boroughs.

Secondly, it is asked whether, if they have the boroughs, they will not be politically supreme, and rule the roast. I answer: Certainly not, as far as facts will help one to a conclusion. If their only road to power is the polling-booth; if they have none of the thousand and one means of being heard in Parliament which other interests possess; if, as may be inferred from the experience of the Reform Act of 1832, the same classes will remain the national spokesmen, however you distribute your power or extend the suffrage; then, I say, if the working classes had all the boroughs in the country, they would not have more members, it may be doubted if they would have nearly so many, as the merchants, manufacturers, and

"new men" got by the Reform Act of 1832. Yet the Reform Act, as we see, has given trade not more than 130 members. And these are already gradually falling into the ranks of the landowners. The danger then, as I have laboured to show, is not, under such a constitution as ours, lest the working classes should have too much power, but lest they should not have enough to ensure a due regard to their interests.

But, thirdly, will it improve Parliament indoors?

There is a perpetual *ignoratio elenchi* about Mr. Lowe's treatment of this part of the subject which is fatiguing. He admits certain evils. But, says he, "there will be evils under any system, and how will a reformed Parliament cure them?" Would not similar arguments have been conclusive against the Reform Bill of 1832? But as Sir E. Buller asked last year, could Mr. Lowe have told us in 1832 how the usury laws would cease, how taxation would be improved, how the corn laws would be repealed, how slavery would be abolished in consequence of Reform? Yet unquestionably these results followed the Reform Bill of 1832 *post hoc* and *propter hoc*. Mr. Lowe knows all this infinitely better than I do. I should be very grateful if he would write the page for me. A constitutional House is improved, when those who ought to be admitted are admitted. And the working men, if admitted to power, will most certainly do for their class what the middle classes have done for themselves since 1832.

However, Mr. Lowe denies the more general charge, and therefore one question only remains—

4. Will the *constituencies* be improved by the admission of the working classes to Parliament? This

is no doubt the knotty question. That the large constituencies will be improved there is every reason to believe. That the small constituencies will, in every case, be improved at first is more doubtful. One thing is certain. No invidious distinctions will now be tolerated. Even if it were true that the working man is drunken and venal, he has as much right to be heard in the House as the drunken and venal squire, the drunken and venal peer, of thirty years ago. Public opinion has reformed the squire and the peer, not exclusion from Parliamentary power, and public opinion may be left to reform those working men who may happen to be drunken now. As to their venality, after the recent revelations of the venality of clergymen, and lawyers, and doctors, the less said about that the better. The admission or exclusion of the working classes from Parliament is a question of constitutional right, not of paternal despotism. If a man is drunk in the streets, hand him over to the policeman; if he is venal, punish him if you can; but do not pocket his political power by gaslight under pretence of political justice.

Those who believe, as all sincere Reformers believe, that the admission of the working classes to Parliament will lead to the great acceleration of national education, cannot doubt that, if education does not absolutely destroy venality, it will not increase it, and they may be allowed to hope that it will, to a great extent, diminish it. In Scotland, where education prevails, bribery is almost unknown, at least in the gross and filthy English form. And for my part, I am just as much disposed to argue from Scotland to England, as Mr. Lowe is disposed to argue to England from

Australia. One argument is at least as good as the other, and I flatter myself my pebble is, in this case, a match for his armour.

To conclude:—

1. The English Parliament is a Parliament of Employers.

2. Employers get there, partly because they like to get there, partly because they have the best means of getting there, partly because the people like to send them there.

3. Employers are represented; they represent themselves, in Parliament, in a thousand ways independent of the Polling-booth.

4. The Employed have as good a constitutional right to be represented in Parliament as the Employers.

5. They are not represented there at all. They have no indirect tendencies to get represented there. Their only direct road to Representation lies through the Polling-booth.

6. The Railways, with no votes at the Polling-booth, have 179 representatives in the House of Commons. The Working Classes, with 130,000 votes at the Polling-booth, have 2 votes in the House of Commons.

7. To them that have politically is given politically. From them that have not is taken away even that which they seem to have.

8. A "swamping share" of votes at the Polling-booth is not in this country synonymous with a swamping share of votes in Parliament.

9. To confound voting power at the Polling-booth with voting power inside the House of Commons is, in this country, political ignorance, or political knavery, or political cowardice, or all three.

10. If labour is not to be swamped in Parliament, it must have a swamping share at the Polling-booth.

11. At the Polling-booth Land, Trade, are swamped already by Numbers. In Parliament, they are supreme.

12. Numbers, which swamp Land and Trade at the Polling-booth, have no voice in Parliament. Witness the Marriage with Deceased Wife's Sister Bill, which a majority of 20 men defeated indoors against the wishes of a majority of 70,000 electors out-of-doors. Witness the Flogging Bill.

13. The House of Commons is not in any danger, at any time, in any way, by any means, of being swamped by Numbers in general or by Labour in particular.

14. In this country, Numbers in general and Labour in particular are in serious danger of remaining swamped in Parliament, as they now are, for ever.

15. It is a subject of doubt, whether any extension of the franchise that could be conceded, any redistribution of seats that could be devised, would give Numbers and Labour that share in the Representation of the House of Commons which, in a constitutional point of view, would for the nation at large be politically just and politically expedient.

16. It may be as difficult in one country to represent "a Million" as it is in another country to represent "Ten thousand."

17. De Tocqueville's theories may apply to the countries from which he got them. They do not apply to England.

18. It is not true to say, that there is a general and universal law in mankind tending to Democracy.

19. It is not true of man and man. One man likes

to govern. One man likes to worship. One man will neither worship nor govern.

20. It is not true of nations. Nations differ as individuals. In one, circumstances make democracy final—for practical purposes; in another, aristocracy; in another, a mixed system, in which one element or another finally prevails.

21. In the physical frame any one muscle or organ may overgrow itself. Another starve.

22. The Democratic element in the body politic may finally starve and never recover itself. As well as the aristocratic.

23. Consider the everlasting Indian castes, and their one anxiety, to remain everlasting. Consider the Pariahs.

24. A concurrence of causes has rendered Democracy in this country impossible.

25. If those whose political bugbear is now Democracy, could awake to long for it, as now they dread it, they would find their most ardent wishes all in vain. In *this* country.

26. The mountains and valleys and watercourses of the British Constitution have found their level.

27. Do anything you will, you will not dig down the mountains—they are too high, and too broad, and too tough, and there are too many of them.

28. The only remaining question is, how to deepen the watercourses, how to cultivate the valleys.

29. The slopes of the hills you attended to in 1832.

30. What you did for the slopes in 1832, remains to be done for the valleys in 1867. You may do too little, and see your labour lost. You cannot do too much. The dangers are *all* on the other side.

VIII.

ON THE WORKING OF AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTIONS.

BY C. H. PEARSON.

THERE is a prevalent idea that the great prosperity of the Australian colonies is due to the accident of the gold fields and the circumstances of a new country, and is only retarded by their self-government under institutions that may be called Democratic. The opinion prevails to such a degree that it notoriously influences the sale of colonial bonds, and is advanced fearlessly at public meetings and in the Press. It is not easy always to decide what is meant by a vague accusation of misgovernment; but in the case of any colony, we may, perhaps, assume it to mean one or more of these charges: that its government wants stability; that the best men are not put into office; that electors are timid, or venal, or careless of their trust; that the character of the judges is deteriorating; that the press is licentious; that public credit is low; that religion and education are neglected; that the ratio of crime is increasing; that no legislative results have been achieved; or, more generally,

that there is a want of cohesion in society, and that class is at feud with class, or the colony itself with the Mother Country. Two or three at least of these charges are often brought against Australia by old colonists, and are the more readily accepted because there is a prevalent impression that society has been inverted in the Antipodes, so that what is low here is high there, and that institutions have been Americanized. Even well-informed Englishmen are apt to believe that the highest circles of Australian society have been largely recruited from successful diggers, the refuse of California, and the dregs of our own penal settlements.

The different colonies of Australia have been founded under very different auspices. The first population of New South Wales was in a large degree convict. When the pastoral interest was created, its success attracted visitors of a more respectable character, but certainly not above the average of the population at home in the years succeeding the French war, when education was at its lowest ebb. The Swan River settlement, now Western Australia, was more aristocratic in its beginnings, and failed; very much because land was tied up in the hands of a squirearchy without a tenantry. South Australia, designed to combine the presence of large landowners with an abundant labour-market, passed irresistibly into the hands of an industrious yeomanry, settled on small holdings. The colony has never been a penal settlement, but a large proportion of its settlers, especially the Germans and Irish, have been brought out at the expense of private capitalists or of the State. The proportion of emigrants who paid their own passage is largest in Victoria, where the gold attracted them in tens of thousands.

Queensland, a natural offshoot from New South Wales, has attracted colonists, by a system of land bounties, and may be regarded as now comparatively free from the convict taint. In fact, convicts are no longer a visible evil in any part of Australia. They have died without founding families, or have been killed off, or are filling the State prisons in Victoria and New South Wales. Still it cannot be doubted that they have lowered the moral tone and the standard of education in many districts, and it must be remembered in fairness to New South Wales, that bush-ranging and the sympathy that makes it possible, are a legacy from English government.

Probably three-fourths of the present adult population of the Australian group went out in the twenty years between 1839 and 1859. They carried with them the ideas of the English middle classes at home; a strong feeling for an extended suffrage, a desire for cheap land on a simple tenure, and a determination not to repeat the experiment of a State Church. Intending in all other respects to reproduce England in their new home, they were yet forced by circumstances into one other point of difference. A House of Peers in the English sense was impossible. There were no peers to begin with; there was no class out of whom they could be manufactured; and the feeling of the settlers generally was opposed to Pitt's theory of giving a hereditary title and share in the Government to every man with £10,000 a year. Still there was a certain feeling in favour of the government by two Chambers as a safeguard against hasty legislation, and as affording a more mixed representation. Accordingly, while the suffrage for the

Legislative Assembly is open to almost every man not a pauper, a vagrant, or a criminal, a second House, or Legislative Council was constituted, to which only men of some property elect. The constitution of this House differs in the different colonies. In Queensland its members are, or were till lately, nominated by the Governor. In South Australia a fourth of the members go out by rotation every four years. But generally its chief features are, that it cannot be dissolved by the Governor, that its tenure of office is comparatively long, and that it is supposed to deal with questions of law rather than with money-bills. Its members are often of higher social position and wider culture than the members of the House of Assembly, whose best men not unfrequently transfer themselves to it when they desire rest.[1] How fearlessly they can act on occasion, has been shown during the recent crisis in Victoria, when the Legislative Council triumphed over the illegal tactics of the Ministry in spite of the Governor, in spite of an overwhelming majority in the other House against them, in spite of the general feeling of the colony, and in spite, I am ashamed to say, of a part of the Liberal press at home.

Ministries, it is true, have short tenures of office; but this results from the circumstances of the colonies rather than from any instability of public opinion. In countries which have no foreign policy, no Church questions, and, as yet, no difficult social problems to solve, the lines of opinion cannot be as sharply drawn as in England. Where the public will is irresistible, tactics lose the im-

[1] The members of the Legislative Council in Victoria consist of the following professions:—Lawyers, 3; Physicians, 2; Brewer, 1; Bankers, 3; Merchants, 10; Rentiers, 6; Landowners and Squatters, 5.—See a letter to the *Spectator* of March 17, 1866, by R. Murray Smith, Esq. of Melbourne.

portance which they have at home. Accordingly as there is no particular reason why one Ministry should be in power rather than another, electors look on with indifference at the scramble for office. Again, causes unknown in Europe operate in a young country. A late Premier of South Australia threw up place that he might visit England; and one of the most active Ministers in Victoria, was lately reported to be migrating to the New Zealand bar. After all, we have had three Ministries during the last eighteen months in England, and may easily have another before Easter. But if the public policy of the colonies be regarded, it will be found perfectly consistent. There are no changes, in any real sense of the word, from a free-soil to a squatter policy, from protection to free trade, or on any subject connected with religion or education. Until the colonies were really freed, there was constant irritation and frequent attempts to change the system of government. Since then there have been little adjustments of unimportant points; but a proposal for sweeping changes is sure to fail, though a Ministry propose it.

Old Australians are a little apt to think that there is a steady process of deterioration in the character of the men elected to the several Parliaments. The times they really regret are those when the colonies were administered by little official and social cliques, presided over by the Governors. Nor is this a mere sentiment. As long as the country at large was not represented, the pastoral interest was supreme in the Government, and the great ideal of the squatters was to cover the continent with sheepwalks. Their aspirations for a capital city did not go beyond a good hotel or a club. It was in the interest

of this policy that the Government of New South Wales tried to suppress the knowledge of an auriferous tract, and it is this class who have striven for years to lock up the waste lands of the colonies. Nor is their policy unnatural. Although the discovery of gold raised the squatters, as a class, from bankruptcy to fortune, the growth of population is steadily adverse to the predominance of the sheep-farming interest. Their lands are taken from them and sold by auction, or their rents are raised, perhaps tenfold; or they find their runs fringed with the small farms of a yeomanry who invade their commonage, put up their lands to sale, and bid against them in the labour market. Moreover the accident that made the squatters exceptionally prosperous for a time, has made them the objects of special jealousy. The runs which they farmed at nominal rents, when more than nominal rents could not have been paid, came to represent fabulous values through no labour of the occupiers, but simply because wool had risen, and there was now a market for stock in the colonies. Men naturally ask why large tracts of arable land should be let below their value to rich absentees? Supported by the banks, which were deeply interested in their success, the squatters have fought hard everywhere to obtain, if possible, copyhold tenures for their runs; and, except for the ballot, it is quite possible they would have triumphed. But as the struggle has been long and exciting, it has created a class of popular politicians, and the sheep-farmer, the aristocrat of Australia, finds himself supplanted in the two Houses by merchants, lawyers, and tradesmen. Probably, if household suffrage existed in England, very few country gentlemen would have been returned to

Parliament during the great Corn Law struggle. But the feeling in Australia is against a policy rather than against a class; and a sheep-farmer who espouses the popular side, has as good a chance of election as any other citizen. My experience is that in all the colonies the leading barristers and merchants are invariably in one of the Houses, or only out through special circumstances, or by their own fault. That another class should also be admitted does not seem to me in itself an unmixed evil.

As, whatever theorists may say, the ballot works simply and effectively in Australia, there is no bribery at elections, and as the voting is by papers, there is no treating and no intimidation. The real blemish in present arrangements is a defective registration, the result of which is, that in South Australia many country electors are practically disfranchised, while in New South Wales there have been, it is said, cases of personation. The first framers of our colonial institutions were evidently afraid of an "ugly rush" from the democracy, and surrounded the act of voting with difficulties which practically keep out many hundreds at every election. As this operates in the pastoral much more than in the settled districts, it certainly does not favour the wealthy classes; and as the fear of democracy is subsiding among all except the chiefs of a beaten Opposition, there is every prospect that the faulty statutes will before long be reframed. A carelessness about voting cannot be corrected by laws. There will always be many men who will not trouble their heads about politics, so long as there is no exceptional crisis, just as there are men who neglect church-going, education, or healthy exercise. From an abstract point of view this

is no doubt to be regretted, but practically it does not much matter whether the same man is returned by 1000 or by 500 votes. In times of excitement the electoral rolls are as well swept as in England.

It is so short a time since the colonies have been freed, that it is impossible to pronounce definitely how far the character of the judicature has been affected. But all presumptions at present are in favour of self-government. As long as the colonies were governed from Downing Street, there was an unhappy tendency to give men of damaged character a chance in a new society. Governor Bligh, in the early days of New South Wales, reported thus of his Judge-Advocate: "He has been accustomed to inebriety; he has been the ridicule of the community; sentence of death has been pronounced in moments of intoxication; .... his knowledge of the law is insignificant, and subject to inclination." Nor was the practice of later years much happier. When the framers of the constitution in one of our Australian colonies were debating whether it would not be better to have the judges appointed from England, that they might secure the independence of the judicature, a paper was passed round reminding them that a judge actually so appointed to the colony was gazetted a bankrupt at the time he went out. The recollection proved conclusive. I quote old cases purposely, though more recent scandals are to hand. It may safely be said that such promotions are no longer possible in Australia, and that the judges nominated since the beginning of self-government are at least equal as a body to their colleagues sent out from England. In Victoria they were involved in the late struggle with the Government, and

their judgments were, I believe, reputed free from the smallest taint of partisanship.

It is difficult to discuss the character of the Press without quoting in illustration of its spirit, and such quotations would easily be suspected of partiality. I will only say, that I know no newspapers in the world more honourably free from invective, or personal attacks, or low scandal, than the Australian. Even during the late fierce struggle in Victoria, though the Protectionist *Age* was sometimes rather unscrupulous, and the Liberal *Spectator* unduly virulent in its tone, there were not often any violations of professional etiquette, as it is understood in England. Any one who cares to look up a few files of the *Sydney Herald*, the *Melbourne Argus*, or the *South Australian Register*, will soon see that their tone is as quiet and dignified as that of the most respectable English or French newspapers. I cannot ascribe this to the tradition of bureaucratic government; for not to mention that the inferior Indian papers used to be distinguished for savage personalities, the present aspect of Australian literature is the work of the last few years. In 1843, the editor of an *Australian Satirist* was sentenced to two years' imprisonment for a publication dangerous to public morals. In Victoria, the *Argus* in old times used to insult the Governor with childish nick-names, and the *Melbourne Punch*, a little later, diverted its readers with jokes on the hospitality of Government House. I observe, too, that books on colonial politics have changed precisely as the papers have changed. Two of the ablest writers of the unconstitutional period, Dr. Lang and Mr. Sidney, appear to find language too weak for their feelings, whenever it

becomes a question to discuss an opponent. Taking three of the last works on Australia, Mr. Flanagan's "History of New South Wales," Mr. Westgarth's "Victoria," and Mr. Forster's "South Australia," I think I might challenge criticism to detect a violent or offensive passage in any of them. All the writers I have instanced are fair instances of their respective societies, having been, in three instances out of the five, directly connected with the colonial press, and also in three out of the five having been members of the colonial parliament.

Public credit may be said to rest on several supports: the power and willingness of the people to bear taxation; their economy in the management of revenue; and the certainty that they will never repudiate a debt. Now, the amount of revenue raised per head in Australia varies from 4*l.* 10*s.* in New South Wales, and 5*l.* in Victoria to 6*l.* in South Australia, against about 2*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* in England. It is true that a large portion of the Australian revenue is derived from the sale and rent of land, which, it may be said, are not properly taxation, though they are perhaps as much so as Crown Lands or the Post-office in England. Deducting these, however, the receipts from other sources, such as customs, assessments, and excise duties, are still higher than in England, being from 3*l.* to 4*l.* the head in New South Wales and South Australia, and about 4*l.* in Victoria. These figures do not indicate "an ignorant impatience of taxation." As regards economy, it may be partly measured by the State debts. The debt of Queensland is said to be about 30*l.* per head;[1] the debt of New

[1] I cannot procure accurate returns for Queensland, and these numbers generally must be regarded as only approximative for countries where population and revenue are exposed to great fluctuations.

South Wales in 1864 was about 15*l.*; the debt of Victoria about the same; and in South Australia, which has the most democratic constitution, the debt is only 5*l.* 6*s.* a head. These liabilities have been incurred for expenditure on reproductive works, such as railways. The debt of Great Britain is 27*l.* a head. In their administration the colonies differ among themselves. New South Wales is said to be wastefully managed; Victoria began on a large scale, and is retrenching; while in South Australia economy is pushed to shabbiness. There have only been two instances in colonial history of anything like repudiation. One was in 1841, when Lord John Russell, then Secretary of State, informed Sir George Gipps that Her Majesty's Government disclaimed "any obligation to ratify the engagements of the Colonial Government." Happily on this occasion there was no financial collapse. South Australia was less fortunate. Colonel Gawler's bills upon the Home Government were dishonoured in 1840, to the temporary ruin of the colony. The action of the Home Government may easily be justified in either of these cases, and I only quote them to show that irresponsible government is not necessarily advantageous to public credit. At present the colonies, except Queensland, borrow on better terms than any foreign States, except France and Prussia; and in the case of France, this difference is, no doubt, partly due to the forced investments in the French Rentes, which the Imperial Government promotes. The past six months have shown that neither railways nor companies, however recommended, can raise money as easily as the republican Houses of Assembly in Australia. Yet I believe there is no doubt

that their debentures are still depreciated by a dread of democracy in the English investing class.

There is complete equality of sects in Australia, except that the Churches of England and Scotland have retained here and there an anomalous privilege or payment which will soon be discontinued, without heart-burning even to the sufferer. This equality is undoubtedly the achievement of the Colonial Parliaments, and at present works so well that I never heard an opinion against it even from the Anglican or Scotch clergy. In Australia, as in England, from various causes, the last twenty years have been a great time for church building, and it would not be fair to set down the whole contrast between recent doings and the apathy of former times to the advantage of constitutional government. But we may fairly point to the success of the voluntary system as a proof that religion has not lost its hold on the colonies. In England where more than 4,000 churches had been built eight hundred years ago, we have now about 15,000, and perhaps 22,000 dissenting chapels, or at the rate of about one building to every 650 of the population. New South Wales in 1864, had 717 places of worship to a population of 378,936, or about 1 to every 520. South Australia in 1863 had 431 places of worship to a population of 140,416, or about 1 to every 330. Victoria comes between the two, and Queensland, as the newest, is the worst provided. Some deduction must be made from the apparent significance of these returns, as the average size of the buildings is naturally smaller than in England, where population is denser. The accommodation in New South Wales was for one-third, and in South Australia for three-fifths, while in England

and Wales it is roughly for one-half. Still the results obtained are very remarkable. The Anglican clergy are the worst off in Australia, being unendowed, and not yet thoroughly trained to the voluntary system. Their incomes probably average from 300*l.* to 600*l.* a year, a curate graduating almost instantly as an incumbent. As provisions are cheaper and habits simpler than in England, these incomes represent rather larger amounts than they would do at home.

In education, fair but not adequate results have been obtained. The foundation of a University in Sydney was one of the last acts of the oligarchical council, which suddenly awoke to the conviction that in sixty-two years of bureaucratic government no place of education had been founded where anything more than the mere rudiments of learning could be acquired. Since then two colleges and a grammar-school have been founded in Sydney, and a university and a public library in Melbourne. Both in Sydney and in Melbourne excellent Professors have been attracted from England; and the average of results obtained is, I was told, rather above the level of Oxford, though the highest Oxford mark is not reached. Schools and tutors of the highest class are rapidly multiplying. The grant for education in Victoria in 1863, was 192,245*l.*, or about 1-15th of the public revenue. In South Australia, during the same year, it was 16,974*l.*, or about 1-37th, a grossly inadequate sum, though here, as in Victoria, the State aid is of course supplemented by local subscriptions and fees. The amount voted last year for Great Britain and Ireland was about 1-65th of the national revenue. The aggregate attendance in schools of all classes in South

Australia, was 1 to every 7.7 of the population in 1863. In Great Britain it was 1 to every 22 in 1865. Even South Australia, therefore, achieves much more in proportion to her population and her means than Great Britain. I think it may be said too, that all classes are increasingly alive to the importance of the subject. I have known a bullock-driver pay 50*l.* a year for the board and education of his two children. On the runs boarding-schools are gradually being introduced for the children of the shepherds, and though they cannot be made self-supporting, the parents are found willing to defray the expenses of board. The misfortune is that these institutions are partial and easily ruined, so that in large districts a generation of children is growing up in primitive ignorance. The problem of educating the children of forty families, scattered perhaps over 1,500 square miles, is no doubt difficult, but must be grappled with if Australia is to overcome the disadvantage of her isolation from the world.

The intricate subject of the statistics of crime, has been dealt with by Mr. Westgarth in a paper read before the Statistical Society. His results tend to show that the crime of Australia varies pretty much in proportion to the convict element. In South Australia, not a convict colony, the ratio of commitments was, in 1862, 1 in 628, and in 1863, 1 in 706, against 1 in 668, the ratio in England and Wales between 1851 and 1855.[1] The few convicts who have filtered through into South Australia, notwithstanding all pains taken to exclude them, contribute to my own knowledge a fair proportion of the

[1] It is impossible to compare later results in England in consequence of the powers of summary conviction now given to magistrates.

crime. But the offences generally are of a slight character. Out of 680 convictions between 1853 and 1863, only 102 were for felonious offences against the person, and only three whites suffered the extreme penalty of the law. Queensland is said to present even better results. In Victoria, during 1853, no fewer than 554 old convicts were sentenced for fresh offences in the colony, which then numbered only 200,000. So large an element of imported crime baffles all calculation as to the amount of what is really indigenous. But it may be fairly said that rapid improvement is taking place in these respects. In New South Wales the ratio of convictions in 1839 was as 1 to 126 of the population, while in 1862 it was only as 1 to 715. I ascribe this improvement, which is paralleled in every part of the continent and in Tasmania, almost solely to the discontinuance of transportation. It is, therefore, indirectly the result of the liberal element in the colonies. For the movement against convict labour was commenced and carried out by the colonists against the influence of the Home Government, against the opinion of the Governors, and with many honourable exceptions, against the feelings and interests of the upper classes of society. The Home Government, under Earl Grey, continued transportation to New South Wales till the colony was prepared for forcible resistance, and even the aristocratic council sent home a decisive protest. The Home Government at a later date refused to discontinue transportation to Western Australia, though it was proved that several hundred expirees had escaped from that settlement to the single colony of Southern Australia. The Governor of New South Wales refused in 1849 to forward a protest against transporta-

tion. When the other colonies were unanimous against it, the squatters of Western Australia petitioned for it as a benefit, continued it till the criminal class outnumbered the free among them, and still resent the enforced discontinuance as an injustice and an injury.

Among the positive results which colonial legislation has attained, the possession of cheap land on a simple tenure must be reckoned. The result was not one easy to compass. Though a new country, Australia is not in any large sense a fertile one, and the arable lands mostly lie in strips near the coast. It is thought that all the land available for agriculture in South Australia will have been bought up in seven or eight years, yet South Australia has more than six times the area of England and Wales, and only 125th of their population. On the other hand, there is so much accumulated wealth in the colonies, that the squatters, backed by the banks, are able to bid freely against intending purchasers. Each colony has solved the problem of creating a yeomanry in its own fashion. In New South Wales the principle of free selection is adopted, by which a farmer may choose his land anywhere on public property, and call on Government to survey it and put it up to auction. In Victoria, land has been put up for sale in all parts; and in such quantities as to swamp the banks, and lots are drawn to determine priority of choice. In South Australia the blocks nearest to the capital are put up in rotation, and the sales proceed till the market appears to be glutted. Perhaps none of these systems is faultless, and that of New South Wales is notoriously unjust to the squatter, who is liable to see all the water on his run put up to auction, or the run cut up by small

settlers, often men of bad character, who plunder his flocks or herds. But the difficulties are so great that I have never seen a good solution for them propounded. Meanwhile the yeomanry has been called into existence. The results of the last harvest in Victoria and South Australia have been estimated at over ten million bushels, or more than a quarter and a half for every head of the population. We in England are said to produce from two-thirds to three-quarters of a quarter, and our average from scientific farming is three times as much to the acre as the colonist gets. But the material results are as nothing compared with the moral. From the moment a man buys land in Australia, he becomes sober, hard-working, and trustworthy, as one who has a stake in the country and a position to maintain. The German and Irish immigrants, who come over often half barbarous, are gradually rising above the English of their own class, simply because the Germans and the Irishmen put their money into land, and the Englishman turns his money into drink for himself and dress for his wife. Much, too, has been done to cheapen the conveyance and registration of titles, by the so-called Torrens Act. This law has achieved its immediate object with so much temporary success, that it is the one Australian measure which English land-owners have been disposed to copy. But I am not sure that it has effected anything which could not be better done in England by giving a parliamentary title to all tenants in fee, so that the rehearsal of prior titles should be economised.

Of course comparatively cheap land and large production may co-exist with depression in some branches of

trade. The Australian artisans complain generally that they have changed for the worse. Employment is not constant; wages are only from 2*l.* 8*s.* to 3*l.* a week; and though meat is at half English prices, and bread no dearer than at home, there are certain offsets in the cost of vegetables and the low quality of the manufactured goods imported. They are accordingly crying out to stop assisted immigration, and impose protective duties on all articles that can be made in the colonies. As regards immigration, I have no doubt they are right. To import labour for the capitalist is unfair to the working class, and does not even achieve its end, as it takes long-continued glutting before rates are lowered in a market where the labourer can afford to bide his time. Practically, if a hundred fresh carpenters are added to nine hundred already in the field, the weekly wage-rate remains the same; but the old hands lose, we will say, ten per cent. of their employment. The operation of this principle in economy has often been pointed out in England, where the labourer, however docile generally, will starve, break windows, or go to the workhouse, sooner than live on rye-bread or potatoes. Now, the Australian minimum of comfort, even for the shepherd, is fixed at about eighty pounds a year (rations being allowed for), or as two and a half to one compared with the English peasant. In the face of this, it can hardly be said that the lowest class in the colonies is no better off than at home, though I have no doubt that the skilled labourer gains nothing or little by leaving the great centre of trade. Transplanted to the colonies, he is in the position of a man who remains as he was while all beneath him are moving up. But I know

of no remedy which legislation can devise for undeveloped manufactures. The real cure will ultimately be found, not in protective tariffs, but in that lower wage-rate to which the Australian artisan must submit, if he is to compete with the Englishman and the Belgian. He is discontented at present because he compares his position with the exceptionally good one of the unskilled labourer and the yeoman, but I know not that any class of men have a right as citizens of the world to more than the cosmopolitan level of profit. So long as they get that, their labour laws at best are not unsound.

Still it may be said that even these statements, assuming all to be proved, do not demonstrate a healthy condition of society. If there is a tendency in the colonies to obliterate the distinctions of classes, to destroy the influence of capital, or to take away the enjoyment of property, thinkers of a certain class will assume that the educated minority who in spite of all their shortcomings are indispensable to progress will gradually give up their interest in politics, and perhaps transfer themselves to England if it is still unreformed. I believe ideas of this sort are the real key to the English dread of Australian politics, and I will endeavour to explain to what extent they are really justified. First then as to class distinctions, my own experience is that allowing for the difference of an old and a new country, and for the most fortunate difference that it is easier for a poor man to make money in Australia than in England, the distinctions of position are pretty much the same in the one country as in the other. The Australian clubs, like the English, are confined to men of liberal education

and easy means. The Australian railways have their three classes. Sleeping as I have often done in Bush Inns, I was never expected to share my room with a bullock-driver or a shepherd. Touching the hat to any stranger in broad-cloth is not fashionable in Australia, as it used to be the distinguishing mark of a convict, and I confess I wish to see it disused in England. But if there is less servility there is also less brutality among the lower orders. The Staffordshire "heave half a brick at him" has no parallel anywhere. It once happened to me to find myself with my horse and trap in a mountain gap where I could neither go backwards nor forwards without assistance. My companion went for assistance, and the first working man found walked two miles in a hot wind to help me, and positively refused to accept money. On another occasion a farmer, a perfect stranger to both myself and my companion, walked a mile with us to show us a difficult bush track. I could multiply cases of this kind to any extent. As for hospitality, it is the virtue of high and low, and is even carried to excess, as it encourages a class of vagrants to subsist on the food and shelter that are freely given them everywhere. The relations of master and servant are a little more difficult than in England. In the absence of any feudal relation between classes, employers are at once less absolute and less indulgent, and there is no doubt a tendency to look upon all engagements as contracts for so much labour at a stated price. Servants too expect more liberty than at home. I cannot say whether the English caricature of the maid-of-all-work going out to ride was founded on any actual fact, but it might happen anywhere in Australia where a shepherd or ploughman often

keeps his horse; and assuming that the household work was done, I cannot see that it was more improper to take a ride than a walk. Employers who once realize the fact that their servants are willing to give work, but not to shut themselves out from the society of their equals, get on in Australia pretty much as in England. Nor is there any feeling against liveries, such as is said to exist in the United States, and a man may array his servants in all the colours of the rainbow, if he and they are agreed. There is, however, a growing disinclination in colonial families to put their daughters to service in houses where they will not be treated as equals. Readers of Pepys will remember that something of this sort was usual in our own country not two centuries ago; and no one can blame parents who desire to secure the best circumstances for their children. But if the practice be good for the moral tone of society, it is no doubt inconvenient for the upper class. At present, however, there is an abundant supply of domestic servants from England and Ireland, and the feeling only operates in obliging persons of small income to put up with rather raw specimens from the labour-market. Englishmen will probably think that it is no great hardship to be reduced to the service of those who have been trained to it at home. But colonial experience does not bear this out, and there is a general dislike to fresh immigrants as intractable, easily discontented, and shiftless. It takes a few years to make them good members of a free society.

But if the position of servants is somewhat freer than at home, it must not be supposed that this liberty extends to the neglect of their duties. Regulations are

enforced in the pastoral districts, which could scarcely be paralleled among ourselves. It is usual, for instance, to forbid shepherds to keep any fermented liquor in their huts. A man who violates this rule has no redress, though he be instantly dismissed at a distance perhaps of 200 miles from a township, and in a part of the country where there are neither mail-coaches nor roads. I could point out several pastoral districts of 20,000 square miles in which not a single public house is licensed. I have seen a man sentenced to two months' imprisonment for refusing to take his master's dray to its destination.[1] Public feeling is in favour of these regulations because they are necessary, because the contracts are voluntary, because employers are relatively more numerous than in England, and because every man expects to be one day an employer. An Australian whom I met in India was rash enough to suppose that labour could be as easily controlled in a bureaucratic province as in a free colony. He tried sheep-farming on the Nilgherry hills, and found that his shepherds invariably ran under cover when a shower of rain came on, leaving their flocks to wander off into the jungle or be devoured by cheetahs. The magistrate to whom he applied for redress told him that he might dismiss his servants, but that the law would not punish them. Of course the experiment had to be given up. I could easily multiply parallels of this kind for the two countries, but I only desire to point out that the present legislation of Australia, which sits so easily that it has never even been murmured at, is in no way opposed to the legitimate interests of the capitalist.

[1] Of course this was an application of a stringent English Act, 4 George IV. c. 34.

The enjoyment of property is supposed by the English upper classes to depend very much on the liberty of bequest, the fulness of possession, and the right to preserve game. As regards the liberty of bequest, the Australian laws and the English are identical; but as there are no lands in Australia with special tenures, such as Borough-English, or gavel-kind, the power of the freeholder is really greater than at home. In one respect there is no doubt a slight difference. If a man die intestate in England, the law supposes that he meant to bequeath his realty to his eldest son. This distinction between real and personal property has been, or will be, abolished throughout Australia. Leaving abstract reasons out of sight, it is inexpedient in a new country, where so much land is held by small owners with no funded property, that the younger children would be a charge upon the public if they were not entitled to a share in their father's estate. It must be remembered that, although a part of the Colonial revenues is applied to the relief of distress, nothing like our English Poor Laws has yet been organized, and the State cannot afford to take needless burdens upon itself. In fulness of possession the Australian is at least equal to the Englishman. There are no dormant rights of way, or immemorial practices of cutting turf or felling timber, which a sharp attorney may raise to the damage and annoyance of the occupant. There are even laws for the preservation of game, to punish those who kill it during certain months of the year, and those who kill it on their neighbour's property. The latter is in fact a stringent law of trespass, and works easily.

Why then, it may be asked, do a certain class of

Australians steadily disparage colonial institutions? The answer has been partly given. Men will always dislike the system under which their rents are raised, or their land taken from them. A class that has once been dominant will always think the country in danger if its supremacy is contested. I am far from saying, too, that in the long struggle between the squatters and the people in different colonies, all justice was on one side, or all wrong on the other; and I quite admit that the Australian sheep-farmers have some real as well as many fanciful grievances. The wonder to my mind is, that an agrarian struggle, involving such enormous interests, should have been conducted so quietly, and have left so little mark on society. The whole has been fought out and settled, while tenant-right in Ireland is still as much matter of dispute as when it was first put forward. But, beside these practical reasons why the squatter should not feel very tenderly towards Australian democracy, it must be remembered that there are other causes tending to alienate the richest and most successful colonists from colonial life. A new country cannot compete with an old in those enjoyments which are the especial privilege of wealth. The society of Melbourne and Sydney is, I think, superior in variety and refinement to that of any English country town, but it is not and cannot be equal to that of London or of Paris. Schiller's feeling that "the beggar at the gates of St. Angelo lives more gloriously than we in our North, for he sees the eternal, only Rome," expresses another side of the same fact. The eye positively hungers, after a time, for something better than the builder's Gothic or bastard Palladian of our colonial structures. It is evident that the

country in which society and art are best enjoyed, and for which, as for England, the European markets are swept, must long continue to attract the class who are rich enough to live where they will. Nor is it difficult to understand why those who have deliberately preferred England, should catch the tone of its society, and imbibe or profess a distaste for republican institutions. But against this revolt of mere wealth, we may fairly set the attachment of educated men. Among the clergy, the barristers and doctors, the military and naval men who visit or live in Australia, men of all characters and all opinions, I never met, and I never heard of, one who found that breeding and education unfitted him for the colonies. My Oxford friends in particular were as good citizens as if they were native to the soil.

I am far from thinking Australian institutions perfect, or Australian statesmen wiser than our rulers in England. I think the electoral system introduced by the English Cabinet into the colonies, does not provide duly for the representation of minorities. I think the protective system, which began by importing labour for the capitalist, and is proceeding to secure the labourer from competition, has already retarded the development of the country, and will weight it seriously in the struggle for wealth. I think the two crying wants of the country, schools and railroads, are too languidly promoted; and I ascribe the inaction in these respects to the influence of small constituencies getting money for local jobs, and to the interests of employers who are afraid of railway contractors coming into the market. But allowing for these and other such blemishes, I do not see that they are conclusive against liberal institutions. Minorities are

not yet represented among ourselves. Our country gentlemen are still Protectionists at heart; and their old argument that we must keep England independent of foreign supplies, is not a whit more public-spirited than the Australian desire to diversify industrial life with all varieties of employment. National education in England is the achievement of a Reformed Parliament, and our system is not supposed to be an example of perfect wisdom. In these and other matters what I really dread for Australia is much more the conservative apathy of men partially shut out from the world, and coming to believe that the trodden way is the best, than any revolutionary fervour for sudden and great changes. Large constituencies of yeomen, influenced by the clergyman and the lawyer, are never likely to commit themselves to abstract declarations of rights or democratic crusades. But I cannot predict the future, and I am slow to believe prophecies from others. My object has been to show that no charge of misgovernment can fairly be sustained at present against the Australian colonies, and that they have done better in all respects since they were set free, than under Government from home. If my facts are true, it will be no argument against them to say that failure ought to have been, or will ultimately be, the result of Republican Government. We can deal positively with the past, but the future is in other hands than ours.

IX.

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE AMERICAN COMMONWEALTH.

BY GOLDWIN SMITH.

In one of the Reform debates, a great opponent of extended suffrage, alluding to America, said, "I always knew that Democracy could do great things in war, but I want to see it do something in peace." This being interpreted means: "For five years I have been predicting that the Republic would fail in the war; that the armies of Irish mercenaries with which she was compelled to fight in consequence of the disaffection of her own citizens, would be annihilated by the Southern cavaliers; that her finances would collapse; that the vices of Democracy, its want of cohesion, and its insubordination, would become fatally manifest; that the people would refuse to support the Government; that anarchy and then military despotism would ensue. My predictions have all been utterly falsified, as those whom I have helped to draw into the Confederate Loan know to their cost. But I still cling to the hope of Repudiation, and of a failure in Reconstruction."

The hope of Repudiation has been more than disappointed. With the difficulties of Reconstruction,—a tremendous task no doubt,—the American nation is still grappling. They have been immensely increased by the loss of Lincoln and the character of his accidental successor. But the nation still faces them resolutely, and with assurance of success.

That Equality has created in America a nation great both in peace and war, wealthy, intelligent, united, capable of producing statesmen and soldiers, yet itself superior to its ablest men; at least as loyal to the principle on which it is founded as any nation ever was to an hereditary sovereign or an oligarchy; and able to meet and surmount difficulties which all its enemies hoped, and most of its friends feared, were insurmountable,—is an established fact, which the existence of a great amount of political evil of various kinds in the United States does not overthrow. It perhaps requires more sympathetic eyes than we can reckon on in our readers to see that, on the whole, a step, though but a step, has been made towards the realization of that ideal community, ordered and bound together by affection instead of force, the desire of which is, in fact, the spring of human progress, though the worshippers of intellectual oligarchy may be unconscious of the existence of such an ideal in the mind of man.

But does the success of Equality in America afford any hope to us? In America there is land for all; and the explosive forces can always find an outlet in emigration to the West. Undoubtedly this is a fact of the greatest importance, and one on which the Governments of old countries, when they are taxed with the prevalence

of pauperism and with their repressive policy, are always entitled to insist. On the other hand, the harvests of America are partly the result of good government: land equally rich lies waste under Austrian or Turkish despotism. The wealth is not only agricultural, but commercial: as many outlets and safety valves are supplied by new inventions and by the opening up of new lines of commerce as by the West; and all this betokens an activity of mind among the people, of which their institutions, stimulating intelligence and offering all the prizes of life to energy, are in part the source, as well as laws good enough and sufficiently well administered to make the possession of wealth secure. If America has an outlet to the West, England has outlets in her Colonies, and if she will only be kind to her own kin, in America itself.

Moreover, American Democracy aids Nature in the equal diffusion of wealth, by substituting the rule of equity for that of primogeniture in the succession to property, and by forbidding, or at least effectually discountenancing entails. Not only is the number of the holders of property thus increased, but fortunes are kept moderate, simplicity of life is fostered, the number of seductive examples of splendid idleness is diminished, and the contrast between wealth and poverty is rendered less striking and less dangerous.

That the abundance of land is a circumstance greatly in favour of Democracy in America is true; that this alone keeps the Americans from shooting at each other from behind hedges, like Irish agrarians, is the sort of stuff which people are ready to believe about America, but about no other Christian and civilized community in

the world. It is closely connected, or rather identical with, the notion that the only reason for which the people of this country desire political power is, that they may divide among them the property of the rich. It does not strike these genial philosophers that the people have physical power already, and might begin universal pillage to-morrow if they pleased.

If free institutions in America have been tried under great advantages, they have also been tried under great disadvantages. Emigration brings population, labour, wealth; but it also brings from Ireland, and South Germany especially, an annual crowd of strangers, ignorant, or at best ill-educated, untrained to political action, and full of anarchic passions excited by resistance to repression under the governments of the old world. The Irish are politically in a state of barbarism. Their only political idea, if the name is not too dignified, is still that of the clan; and the most worthless demagogues take the place of the clan chiefs. English notions of American politics are derived mainly from New York, where the correspondents of our newspapers live. The corruption, mob-rule, demagogism of New York, can hardly be exaggerated, though even in New York you have a good supply of water, outwardly decent streets, good public schools, and enough of law and police at all events to guard the growth of immense commercial wealth. But New York is politically an Irish and German city. The State outvotes it; the State, now that the Irish are deprived of their slave-owning allies, will very probably control it with a firmer hand. Morrissey, the prizefighter, was elected to Congress not by the Americans, but by the Irish. His election caused as

much scandal in America as it did here, where, since the time of Mr. Gulley, only the patrons of prizefighters have sat in Parliament. The same thing which is true of New York is true in some measure of the other great seaboard cities, where the emigrants land, and where the Irish especially, from their want of intelligence and enterprise, linger and form low quarters. Were it not for the public schools, these wanderers would seriously endanger the civilization into which they are received. This Irish and German America is the America which Englishmen know: the America of yeomen, tradesmen, and artisans which contends successfully with the Irish and German difficulty is to Englishmen almost unknown.

Again, America being still but half settled, and emigration still going on, not only from Europe, but internally from East to West, the texture of society is still loose and shifting: the conservative and organizing forces of local attachment, personal and family influence, do not yet act as they do here. For the same reason the power of party organizations is disproportionately strong; there is nothing to withstand them: there is no other mode of selecting candidates than that which they supply; and the selection of candidates, not the choice between candidates when selected, is, after all, the grand difficulty of representative institutions.

America further labours politically, as well as in other respects, under the general disadvantages of new countries: the want of culture, the want of a past. American legislators are not wilfully chosen by a depraved Democracy for their roughness of manners: they come from a rough people. Lincoln was not made President because, to use the language of our aristocratic

Press, he was "a brutal boor;" but because in Illinois there were only "brutal boors" to be had. It is the same with our Colonies, though they enjoy the advantage of a connexion with the British Crown. The general want of taste and refinement in politics as in other spheres, is in a word not Democratic but Colonial. A hundred years hence, commerce will have ceased to be so absorbing as to take the American youth from college at a very early age. Education will be higher, and its influence will be more felt in public life. The want of a past and of historical ideals, again, cannot fail to detract both from the steadiness and the dignity of public character. The rapid development of commerce, too, incident to a new country with great resources, unquestionably engenders for the time, together with the grasping desire of growing suddenly rich, a looseness of commercial morality which affects the integrity of public men. It was so here during the Railway mania. It is so in the British Colonies. It is so in the United States. And in the British Colonies and the United States, society being less settled than in the mother country, the censorship of opinion, whether in commercial or in political life, is less penetrating and less strict.

The grand disadvantage, however, under which Democracy has laboured in the United States, is of course the existence of Slavery, a thing so little connected with Democracy, that it has received the ardent sympathy of the reactionary party in this country, as the most rampant denial of the principles of equality and justice on which Democracy is based. For thirty years previous to the Civil War, with the nominal interruption of General Harrison's brief Presidency, the

Republic had been in the hands not of Republicans, but of the Slave-owning Aristocracy, supported by the Irish mob of the North, and by a number of northern politicians, especially among the rich, who are renegades in their hearts from the true Republican faith. With this domination, which dates from the great development of the slave interest consequent on the discovery of the cotton-gin, came in the tide of evil. The slave-owner reigned in the Legislature. His temper produced scenes such as the assault of Brooks on Mr. Sumner. His spirit predominated in the foreign policy of the Republic, and led to the Mexican War, against which the true Republicans protested, the Ostend Manifesto, and the designs against Cuba, as it had in fact produced the War of 1810, against which, again, the true Republicans protested. The patronage of the State was used to fee the demagogues, his allies. General Jackson was the author of the accursed maxim, "To the victors belong the spoil," and of the system of changing every place-man down to the postmasters, which is the bane of American politics and administration. Not only were the men of the Republic corrupted, but its principles were undermined. There was a social as well as a political ascendency of the slave-owner's spirit. A terrible party tyranny was established. Disgust and despair drove good men from public life. The other party was tainted by the conflict. When the Republicans preferred "Old Tippecanoe" to Mr. Clay as a candidate for the Presidency, it was not from gratuitous depravity of taste, but because they found it necessary to countermine the tactics which had brought forward General Jackson. The military mania, which rendered those

tactics successful, had been produced by the Southern Democrat's War of 1810.

This all-important fact has been somewhat obscured by the name "Democratic," usurped by a slave-owning oligarchy and its dependent rabble. Nevertheless, the oligarchical party on this side of the water did not fail to recognise its friends, and the assumption by the Anti-republicans in America of the name "Conservative" obviates misapprehension for the future.

Slavery, by its mortal antagonism to Republican principles, produced the Civil War which is held up so logically as a warning against Republicanism; and the present political difficulties are only the sequel of the Civil War. They have been aggravated and prolonged not only by the murder of Lincoln, a truly Southern act, but by the conduct of President Johnson, a Southern politician, and an old slave-owner and Democrat though a Unionist, whose faults, in the estimation of the most discerning Americans, arise mainly from his want of familiarity with free institutions and of the corresponding habits of political thought.

We have not yet seen how the Republicans will govern, for we have not yet arrived at normal times. The great struggle between Slavery and Freedom has not been brought to its close, and the line taken by the President renders the contest one of extraordinary acrimony and fierceness. We must compare the temper of the American Legislature at the present juncture with that of the Long Parliament and other assemblies in times of revolution. Two things, however, are certain: that the American people, restored to their sovereignty by the overthrow of the oligarchy, have shown unprece-

dented clemency in dealing with the vanquished rebels, and that they have shown a moderation equally unprecedented in at once disbanding their veteran and victorious army; and this, although, in addition to the ordinary temptations, they had angry questions open with this country, their feelings were greatly excited against us, and Canada lay open to invasion.

Democracy is not answerable for any special defects, or for the consequences of any special defects, in the machinery of the American Constitution. Hamilton had in his mind the pattern of a European monarchy, of which he produced a Democratic counterpart, with an elective President for a king, and a Senate for a House of Lords. The elective Presidency with its patronage has always been the grand incentive of faction, intrigue, and corruption; and the hope of obtaining it, which never leaves the breast of an American politician, has been the greatest cause of obliquity in the courses of public men, of which the tragic end of Daniel Webster's career is the most signal instance; while the division of the sovereign power between the President and the Congress has led to a struggle something like that which the division of sovereign power between the King and the Parliament produced in this country in the time of the Stuarts, and which was ended, after a civil war and a deposition, by the reduction of the monarchy to its "Constitutional" state. Perhaps the institution of the elective Presidency was a mistake. Perhaps again it was a mistake to leave undecided, or at least not to decide beyond the possibility of dispute, the question between national sovereignty and States' rights, which is now being solved by civil war and political convulsions. And so, again, the arrangement by

which the Vice-President, a wholly unimportant officer, and therefore liable to be rather thoughtlessly elected, steps into the place of the President on the death of the latter, was certainly improvident, and has twice led to disaster. It is not impossible that after the revelation of these defects in the machinery by the present complications, the Constitution will be altered. But Democracy, social and political, will remain as it was before.

The payment of representatives, again, is an institution quite separable from an extension of the suffrage. It is obviously calculated to make politics a trade into which low adventurers are drawn. Perhaps it may be said, on the other side, that the professional politicians are more industrious and understand the business of the country better than the amateur politicians of our Parliament.

In ordinary times there is very little for the central legislature of America to do, the most important work being done by the legislatures of the several States, or rather by the still more local institutions. This has contributed, with the coarseness and violence of the Democratic party, hitherto dominant, to repel such cultivated intellect as there is in America from public life. Highly cultivated intellect in England does not seek to take part in the petty business of the Town Councils. But it would be a great mistake to think that intellect, which is the social peerage of America, is politically an object of aversion. All parties are proud of bringing forward and employing their literary men, of which Bancroft and Motley are not the only instances; and we will venture to say that such an appeal to the dislike of superior intelligence as was made by the member who said that Mr. Mill was too clever for the House, would meet with

less response in the American legislature. The American politician has more faith in intellect, though the works of intellect may be more abundant in the Tory squire. In the late war almost all the intellectual eminence of America was enthusiastic on the side of the country and its institutions.

The rich again, who in America are, generally speaking, still connected with some mercantile concern, are naturally disinclined to go to a mere political city, without society, like Washington, and to spend half the year in such business as that of Congress in ordinary times. But we never could learn that rich men were systematically excluded from the representation, or that they were otherwise politically maltreated. The question whether mere wealth is honoured enough in the Republic, depends upon the further question, What amount of honour is due to wealth unconnected with personal merit, and useless, perhaps even noxious, to the public? A noble and beneficent use of wealth, to which such of the wealthy men in America as desire a high position are driven by the absence of peerages and baronetcies to resort, certainly does not fail to gain a reasonable meed of consideration. America has sybarites, who come whimpering to the sybarites of Europe against the country which furnishes the means of their Parisian pleasures; and these men played an unpatriotic and ignoble part in the war; but General Wadsworth was very far from being the only case of a wealthy man who sealed with his blood his attachment to the institutions under which wealth is supposed to be oppressed.

We are apt to be greatly misled by fixing our attention too much on the central Government of America and

the politicians. The central Government in common times is comparatively unimportant, and therefore draws into it comparatively little of that which is highest and really most influential in the nation. The country is not governed by the politicians; it is administered by the politicians, but it is governed by the people, who take all really great questions into their own hands.

An opponent of Reform charges American Democracy with Protectionism, while he compliments his Tory supporters on their glorious freedom from any tendency of the kind. But Protectionism is the vice not of Democracy, and much less of American Democracy, but of ignorance. It has prevailed under every form of government till the light of economical science had become diffused. The Free-traders of the Western States are Republicans in every sense as well as the Protectionists of New England. Our Colonies are Protectionist like America, because in the Colonies, as in America, economical science has been little studied. The taxation hitherto has been so light, that questions of tariffs have not been much pressed on the attention of the nation. With the mass of the American people the fallacy is rather patriotic than economical; they fancy, as the most enlightened Englishmen did less than half a century ago, that it is desirable artificially to encourage every kind of production in order to foster all the various elements of national character, and make the nation self-supporting in case of war. Upon this notion the manufacturers of New England and the ironmasters of Pennsylvania have been up to the present time playing with fatal success. But there are indications, in the shape of calls for moderation from a part of the Protectionist Press, that the system

has been carried to a pitch of absurdity which is rendering its unsoundness palpable to the practical intelligence of the American people. And when once public opinion turns, Protection will go by the board. There is no power like that of our landed interest, with its nomination counties and pocket boroughs, to make head in defence of monopoly against the national conviction. With France we have a commercial treaty, which, as its chief negociator told the writer of this paper, was made by the French Government more from diplomatic motives than from love of Free-trade, while in America we encounter a highly Protectionist tariff. Pass ten years, with France we shall still have the Commercial Treaty, with America we shall have Free-trade.

Tyranny of opinion is another charge constantly made against American Democracy. Party government, which prevails, and not only prevails, but is consecrated, in this country as well as in America, necessarily implies, wherever it exists, a certain tyranny of opinion, and an extinction, to a great extent, of the independence of individual members of the party. Sir Robert Peel was not only deposed, but morally assassinated, for having, as it was alleged, apostatized from his party, though under the pressure of the most overwhelming necessity, and in conjunction with the most eminent of his followers. Of course, in such a crisis as that which at present exists in America, the issues being of the most vital kind, and the passions of civil war still glowing, party spirit runs very high, and desertion of the party standard is bitterly resented. Even on this subject, however, very exaggerated things are said. Mr. Stevens, under whose lash the majority are described as being, has been more than

once abandoned by a portion of his party, and defeated on important questions: and his policy is discussed with great freedom and discrimination by journals of Republican opinions. The correspondent of the *Times* complains that, in an election, a candidate who has not obtained the regular nomination has lost the day before it is begun: as though under the system of party government in England, or in any other country, it were not equally true, that a candidate to be successful must be nominated by his party, and that the choice of the elector is virtually limited to the candidate whom his party brings forward. If by tyranny of opinion it is meant that the majority in America, now that the violent domination of the slaveowner is at an end, prevent the minority from expressing their sentiments or from acting as they please in support of their principles, nothing can be less true. The Presidential election which took place in the middle of the Civil War was a most trying occasion. Yet at that election the M'Clellanite minority in Massachusetts, where they were at once weakest and most odious, expressed their sentiments both on the platform and in the press, held their meetings, demonstrations, and torch-light processions, and hung out their party banners across the public streets, without the slightest hindrance from the majority. To this the writer can testify as an eye-witness: and he can also testify to the fact that even reputed renegades, whose names stank in the nostrils of the party which they had left, were treated by leading members of that party with perfect social courtesy and even friendliness at the time of the election.

Demagogism, again, is no doubt a great curse of

America. We have noticed some special circumstances, quite separable from the essence of Democracy, by which it is aggravated; the payment of representatives, and the absence in a new country of those settled superiorities by which in old countries (in France, for example) candidates are designated, and for want of which needy or ambitious adventurers have too clear a field. But demagogism is an inherent vice of representative institutions, and one against which, under all representative institutions, good citizens have constantly to contend. It is not cured, nor essentially mitigated, by narrowing the basis of representation. The demagogism which panders to the passions of a small mob of Tory squires by vilifying and slandering Sir Robert Peel, may be less coarse than that which panders to the passions of a great mob in New York, but it is just as noxious and just as vile.

If the possession of power by the working classes necessarily leads to socialistic legislation, we cannot fail to find that result in the United States. Opponents of Reform feel this so strongly, that they erect the wirepullers, as the electioneering managers of parties are called, into the leaders of Trades Unions, with which they have about as much to do as the bishops. The fact is, that no organization of the working classes so compact and so hostile to the employer class as our Trades Unions, exists on the other side of the Atlantic. Before the Legal Tender Act strikes were very rare. The derangement of prices caused by the Legal Tender Act, among other bad effects, rendered strikes more frequent. But such a combination of class against class as that with which we are afflicted, would be an absurdity when all alike are in possession of political power, and at liberty to promote and defend their

own interests by Constitutional means. There are difficulties of contract, of course, between workmen and employers in America, but there is very little antagonism of class. We are not aware that American legislation, as a matter of fact, presents any traces of socialism. The taxation—heavy, and therefore stimulating to socialistic tendencies as it now is—is distributed, as between the different classes, in pretty much the same way there as it is here. The American Income-tax is not more socialistic than that of Pitt. As regards local taxation, the rich are, we believe, treated in the assessment of rates with rather exceptional lenity, from a desire of retaining them in the district. Wild socialistic and communistic theories have, it is true, from time to time sprung up, among the other rank growths of the virgin soil; but they have as rapidly perished.

An attempt has, however, been recently made by certain political adventurers to get up a workmen's party. The attempt came to a head the other day in the State elections of Massachusetts; and this is the account which the *Boston Advertiser* of November, 1866, gives of the result:—

"Our State election has proved to the satisfaction of most people the truth of what we asserted last month—that the working men utterly repudiate the 'working men's party.' The cry of the demagogue has fallen unheeded on their ears; they have refused to believe that they were persecuted and wronged, and they have turned away from the insidious voice of the broker in votes.

"Take, for example, the representative vote in the Boston wards. When the 'working men's' candidates

were left to stand upon their own merits, as actually happened in three or four nominations, with one exception they each received less than a hundred votes. When a single Republican or Democratic candidate was endorsed by the 'working men,' he ran ahead of his ticket only from thirty to fifty votes. In the Fourth Congressional District Mr. Wightman was held up as a model working man, and working men were invited, exhorted—entreated to rally round him. Instead of rallying round him, they rallied in the other direction, and the result was that Mr. Hooper's plurality over the Democratic candidate was relatively larger in the proportion of almost three to two than in 1864, when the eight-hour question was not yet agitated. In the Third Congressional District, General Guiney was put up to draw votes from Ginery Twichell, and the returns show that Mr. Twichell's majority over all the candidates was considerably greater, taking into consideration the whole number of votes cast, than Mr. Rice's plurality over Mr. Sleeper in 1864. There were rumours that Guiney's friends 'sold out' early in the day; at all events, his vote in the district was 436 out of a total of 9064.

"We believe these to be figures which do not lie. It is true that in the congressional districts it was generally understood that the issue was national and not restricted to the narrow limit of any local or collateral question. But in the State representative districts this was not the case; everybody understood that he was at liberty to vote without regard to party restrictions if he saw fit, and the fact that neither the Democrats nor the Republicans did turn aside from the regular nominations is a fact full of significance.

"In the coming municipal election it is hardly worth while to continue this farce of a working man's ticket. The votes of the clique have ceased to have any marketable value; and if the nominations are made independently, the candidates will be made to appear in a very ridiculous light by the smallness of their votes. The mechanics of this city understand very well that their interests have not suffered in past years, and they see very clearly that all this assumed solicitude for the rights of working men amounts to just nothing at all. The Democratic leaders will do well to consider this matter before they strike hands with this feeble faction, which without their countenance must fade away on the instant. Let the Democrats consider how much they were benefited by their collusion with the 'working men' in the election of Tuesday, and judge who gains the most by such an alliance. We can hardly hope that the men who engineer this 'working men's movement,' and whose claim to a reputation for industry is, we suspect, mainly based on their activity just before an election—we can hardly hope that these men will give up their amusing and exciting—we will not say profitable occupation—until they are forced; but if their candidates are ignored by both parties next month, we suspect that their weakness will be so apparent, that they will have to seek some less congenial labour."

If the absence of socialistic tyranny over the other classes on the part of the enfranchised working men of America is surprising, so also to all who have never studied the working man's real character, is their readiness to use political authority for the purpose of placing moral restraints upon themselves. The closing of public-

houses on election days is a piece of moral legislation which it would be almost hopeless to attempt in this country. And the Maine Liquor Law, be it in itself judicious or injudicious, is at least an indication that the "drunken" classes will, if admitted to political rights, consent to measures for their own reformation. General education and Free Churches may be classed among the advantages which Democracy enjoys in America, and which it would not enjoy here. General education is, of course, the pillar of the American State. It is not only received in the schools, which indeed vary very much in their excellence in different districts, but constantly imbibed from the atmosphere of an active-minded community, full of political interest and intelligence, and in which self-education is stimulated by the feeling that everything is open to exertion. The Free Churches not only extend the social and political influence of religion over classes which, under our system, religion entirely fails to reach, but being necessarily pretty Democratic in their Constitution, as the purse is in the hands of the laity, they elevate and purify the spirit of Democracy through Church elections and legislation; while the Churches themselves are being gradually divested of their darker and more arbitrary dogmatism by the element of political and social equity in which they are placed. These, we say, may be counted among the advantageous circumstances under which an extended suffrage is tried in America, and which would be wanting here. They would not long be wanting here. From really popular institutions religious liberty is inseparable; it is almost inconceivable that a popular Government should either be able, or desire, to tax the whole community for the

support of a particular creed. General education is a vital necessity of Commonwealths; they are not only led to it by their philanthropic tendencies, and their regard for all the members of the body politic, but driven to it by the instinct of self-preservation. When the masses have political power in their hands, you can no more afford to leave them in ignorance than you can afford to leave them in the sanitary condition which breeds pestilence. It is very probable that the Irish children who live at New York would be left to welter in their barbarism, instead of being put to school, were it not that they are the destined possessors of a power which they must use either for the good of the State or for its subversion.

There is one objection to American Democracy which we had almost forgotten—its alleged barrenness of eminent men. One of the most admired passages in the speeches of Mr. Lowe warned us against being drawn to that arid waste of Democracy, in which every mole-hill is a mountain. In his judgment, apparently, historic eminence is to be found, not in Athens, or the Italian Republics, but in Bœotia and the Feudal Monarchies. Many people think Lincoln, Grant, and Sherman eminent men, to say nothing of Mr. Stanton, whose superhuman energy bore the burden of administering the war. But the fact is that individual eminence, so far as it consists in the superiority of a single man to his fellows, necessarily declines as general intelligence advances, and has declined most where general intelligence is at the highest point. Hero-worship may have a place in the age and country of Odin, perhaps in those of Luther; in the latest development of humanity, the American Commonwealth,

it has none. There, instead of individual greatness, you have the greatness of a nation; instead of a king and his subjects, you have a community; instead of loyalty, patriotism and attachment to the common good. It may be a great degradation, but such, apparently, is the ordinance of fate.

X.

THE HISTORICAL ASPECT OF DEMOCRACY.

BY JAMES BRYCE.

"WHEN I compare," says De Tocqueville, "the Greek and Roman republics with the American States, the manuscript libraries of the former and their rude population with the innumerable journals and the enlightened people of the latter; when I remember all the attempts which are made to judge the modern republics by the assistance of those of antiquity, and to infer what will happen in our time from what took place two thousand years ago, I am tempted to burn my books, in order to apply none but novel ideas to so novel a condition of society." These words of the founder of modern political science express the principle upon which that science may be said to rest, a principle which he was never wearied of expounding and illustrating, that a political system or form of government by itself is nothing, and acquires a meaning only when it is regarded as the result and efflux of national life. Historical study has within the last century undergone a great change, by the distinct recognition of the truth that it is a historian's business not

merely to record public events, wars and treaties, intrigues and seditions, but to investigate, and strive so far as he may to reproduce, in its entirety that portion of the past whereof he treats. The province of history, as every one is now willing to admit, is primarily the religious and intellectual life of nations, the phenomena of their society, the economical conditions under which they have lived. It is not until these have been grasped and understood that their political institutions can be fairly estimated; it is only when viewed in the light of these, and constantly explained by them, that an historical narrative can have any value beyond that of a romance or a series of entertaining biographies. If in thus enlarging her scope History seems to have removed the past further from us, by bringing into relief the differences between the life of man in other times and countries and in our own, she has in another sense brought it nearer to us, by giving to the past a sense of reality which was wanting to those dignified historians who talked only of kings and parliaments. But the change has been chiefly important in this, that it has abolished those broad and sweeping generalizations which it was formerly the fashion to draw from a few facts taken at random. In becoming more of a science—more delicate, more complex, more minutely analytic—History has not ceased to be of practical value to the politician, but she has become valuable in a different way. She gives him more principles, and sounder ones, than heretofore; but she makes it no easier to apply them, and she leaves the difficulty of prediction where it was. We are taught by her to understand better the springs of human action—especially of collective human action; to observe the laws by which social phenomena

act and react upon political; to know what method and what signs must be used to determine the direction in which the current of events is at any moment setting. But we are forbidden to argue loosely and hastily from the circumstances of one state or nation to those of another, or from those of a nation at one period of its growth to the same nation at some other period. We are warned against confounding names with things, and essentials with accidentals; against supposing, when we find in different ages and countries two institutions bearing a certain external resemblance to one another, that they are necessarily the same, and that the results which flowed from the one may be expected to flow also from the other.

For these reasons, it has become a maxim among writers who, like De Tocqueville, have treated history scientifically, that there is nothing so misleading as an historical analogy; not that some historical analogies are not true, but because the human mind, supposing (as Bacon says) a greater uniformity in things than it sees, is apt to state them without those limitations which qualify and explain their value. And if misleading even to the student, much more do they become dangerous when employed as arguments in discussions on practical politics. Being addressed to a public which has not the leisure or the special knowledge to test their correctness, being put forward with a more or less conscious suppression of all that can tell against the conclusion it is desired to establish, they import the passions of the moment into questions which should be handled with scientific calmness; and, while they throw no true light upon the problems of the present, they narrow and

distort our views of the past. In spite, however, of these obvious dangers, the so-called argument from history has been very rife among us of late years, and has been unsparingly employed by public writers and speakers to discredit, not democracy alone, but in reality all free institutions. It must be owned that the opponents of Reform have handled their weapon very skilfully. They have appealed so confidently to history and to the opinions of philosophers, that the world has supposed history and philosophy must be on their side. They have gathered together all the vices of democratic governments in all ages—the instability of Athens, the corruption of Rome, the ferocity of the French Revolution, the lobbyists, caucuses, and wire-pullers of America; and out of these, all combined in one, they have constructed a monster like the Chimæra of the Iliad, terrible in every part, "a lion in front and a dragon behind, breathing forth the dreadful might of quenchless fire." And this they have named Democracy. It is true that the systems of Athens, and Rome, and America, have all had faults enough, but they have not been the same faults; they have been often faults of so opposite a nature that they could not possibly co-exist in the same subject.

When the adversaries of an extended franchise have condescended to draw their arguments not from all States at once, but from some single example, it has been most frequently to the republics of ancient Greece that they have pointed as exhibiting the dangers and evils of popular government. They have argued somewhat in this fashion: "In Athens, Syracuse, Mitylene, and certain other cities, we see democracy. In Athens, Syracuse,

Mitylene, and the same other cities, we see grave political evils. Therefore, wherever we find democracy, we shall find grave political evils." This is as much as if we were to say, "England, Spain, Italy, and Russia are monarchies. In England, Spain, Italy, and Russia, the lowest class are grossly ignorant. Therefore monarchy is the cause of popular ignorance." To make their arguments against democracy cogent as respects modern England, they were bound to show either that it was to democracy alone, and not to other co-existing causes, that the evils of the Greek republics were due; or else that the same circumstances and conditions—moral, social, and economical—which accompanied democracy in the Greek states, would be found along with it if it were now established in England. They have not tried to prove the former of these alternatives, because the least inquiry into the history of Greece shows that its institutions were inseparably interwoven with the physical and social peculiarities of the country and the nation. Still less have they attempted the latter, because it is evident that the circumstances of ancient Greece and modern England, so far from being similar, are in every respect singularly contrasted with one another. It may be well to illustrate this contrast in some of its more obvious points.

I. The first and most striking difference is in the respective size of the States between which the comparison is made. Within an area less than one-third that of England there were at the time of the Peloponnesian war from one to two hundred small city-states, almost all of them republics, some federally connected with or accustomed to look up to others, but all legally sovereign

and independent. The territories of many stretched only a mile or two from the walls of the city, whilst those of the greatest did not interpose a day's march between the frontier and the capital. Athens and Syracuse—probably the greatest of all—had in their most flourishing days a population not exceeding 500,000; and of these only some 30,000 enjoyed civic rights. Hence the governing assemblies or parliaments of these States were not representative but immediate, or, as the French say, primary. If the constitution was oligarchic, those few persons in whose hands birth or wealth placed the government administered it in their own persons. If it was democratic, the sovereign power resided in the general assembly of the adult male citizens, a body which (at Athens) met regularly once every ten days, and as much oftener as the occasion might require, heard proposals and speeches from any member who chose to address it, elected magistrates, gave audience to ambassadors, and decided by its vote on every question. The so-called Senate was a mere standing committee, chosen by lot, and charged only with the preparation of questions for debate in the assembly and the despatch of formal business; the magistrates and office-bearers, civil, military, and judicial, had little or no power of independent action, and no veto whatever: Demos himself, to use the forcible expression of Aristotle, was king—a king into whose hands were gathered all the powers of the State. To describe the phenomenon in the language of English politics, every citizen was not only a Member of Parliament, but a part of the Executive Government; not checked, like the Members of Parliament and the Executive in modern times, by the sense of responsibility to others, but

passing, in the heat of debate, stirred by the intoxicating sympathy of numbers, a final and irreversible decision upon questions of the gravest moment. The natural consequence of such a system was, that any feeling or belief which arose among the citizens spread rapidly and acted powerfully. Oscillations of opinion were sudden and violent, for the people, although not fickle, were eminently mobile, susceptible from their very excess of acuteness to every transient impression. And, as the smallness of the community and the frequent meetings of the assembly made it easy to give expression to every impulse and discuss every scheme, many things were done hastily, and some foolishly.

In these city-communities, moreover, the passions of political life were habitually more intense than they can be, even on the most exciting occasions, in a country like England. The interests of a private citizen became entangled with those of his party; its champions were his own friends, its opponents were hated as personal enemies. Hence principles were easily lost sight of, and men struggled to gratify their passions, or, it might even be, to seize an adversary's property; compromises and mutual concessions became impossible; and bitterness, justified as the necessary virtue of a party man, soon passed into ferocity. In particular, the vice of personal ambition attained a portentous height. In countries like our own, the vastness of the field, while it checks and moderates vanity and the lust of power by reminding the individual of his insignificance, prevents him from acquiring a personal influence which can imperil the Constitution. In the Greek cities those very conditions which produced so many versatile and brilliant

politicians made them unable to support prosperity; and an orator or a general was no sooner useful to his country, than he became its most dangerous enemy.[1] Nor was the passion for power confined to the leaders; it pervaded the whole people, and made them, not content with guiding the administration of affairs, insist upon actually conducting it. In many States, and notably in Athens, it was the custom for the Senate, the judges, and the magistrates, all except those whom it was absolutely necessary to choose on the ground of fitness, to be appointed by lot, in order that every citizen of every degree might have a chance of sharing in the government of the State.

Of the faults to which this system of city-republics gave rise—faults not unmixed with great merits—some are attributable solely to the smallness of these States; others to the smallness of the State taken in conjunction with its popular government. But since all belong not to democracies but to small democracies, it follows that we have no reason to expect them in a great State, whatever its form of government. The immediate and sovereign assembly of adult males is as peculiar to the republic of twenty or thirty thousand citizens, and as natural there, with all its results for good and ill, as the representative Chamber of Deputies is in the kingdom or federation of thirty millions. That unstable policy with which Athens is so often charged, the want of checks and balances in the constitution, the violence of faction, the tendency of personal interests and passions to prevail over devotion to the public good, the rude assertion of its

[1] Instances of pure-minded patriotism, like that of Timoleon or Lydiadas, are mentioned with an evident wonder, which is the best proof of their rarity.

power by the party for the moment dominant, the perilous height to which the ambition of leaders mounts—these are not the results of democracy, for they were at least as conspicuous among the oligarchical as among the democratic States of Greece; they are evils from most of which no community is free, but to all of which small communities are more peculiarly exposed. If we seek a modern parallel to the city life of Greece, it will be found, not in the imperial politics of Britain, but in the contests of a vigorous municipality, or of what a municipality would be if it were emancipated from the control of the rest of England, and if its town-council or its vestries had to decide, not on matters of paving and lighting, the management of the local police, or the imposition of a church-rate, but on questions of peace and war with its neighbours, the enactment of laws, the division of the public lands, the banishment of persons dangerous to the commonwealth.

If there was any institution which the Greeks considered peculiarly characteristic of a democracy, it was the institution of the Lot (mentioned a few lines above); the custom of letting chance decide what persons should compose the Senate and fill the public magistracies. No custom seems to us more strange or more pernicious; but there is none which puts in a clearer light the contrast between States whose size made it possible that every citizen should participate directly in the government, and a country in which the most that is asked for the citizen is that he should be permitted, once in four or five years, to record his vote for the candidate whose abilities and opinions he approves.

II. The Greek republics were all of them Slave States,

—that is to say, they were not democracies at all, but oligarchies of free and privileged citizens, placed among a vastly greater population of slaves and unenfranchised strangers. At Athens the adult male citizens never exceeded thirty thousand; whereas the slaves numbered about four hundred thousand, and the μέτοικοι, or resident aliens, about forty thousand.[1] "If this be so," some one may answer, "so much the worse for democracy. If it was dangerous when it admitted only a few to share in power, when there was a slave population by whom the more degrading sorts of labour were discharged, so that even the humbler class of freemen were left in comparative leisure, must it not be much more dangerous in a free State?" Whatever plausibility such a view may seem to possess will disappear when we bethink ourselves of the incidental results of slavery, and all the social phenomena which its existence involves—phenomena most unlike those of our own country. When there are comparatively few ruling citizens among a large subject population, those evils which have been ascribed to small States are intensified. The area of the governing body is so limited that it becomes too easily and too quickly permeated by a single feeling or idea. Hence time was not taken for reflection; the people were soon persuaded, when they were persuaded they voted, and what they had voted was executed on the spur of the moment. The handicrafts being in great measure left to slaves, many even of the poorest citizens made politics their business. The process of governing amused, the consciousness of power excited, them; the constant habit of listening to

[1] The adult male μέτοικοι numbered about 10,000 at the time of the census under Demetrius Phalereus, B.C. 309.

arguments in the assembly and the law-courts gave wonderful keenness to their intellects. But they wanted that stability of mind and sense of responsibility which the pursuit of some regular occupation, though it be only a manual one, is found to give. A poor class which does not work, is always a dangerous class; and in a Slave State work is held to degrade the freeman.[1] Nor is this all. Slavery has even a worse lesson in store than the contempt for labour—the contempt for human life and human suffering. In Greece slavery had justifications which no modern slave-owner could appeal to; yet in Greece, as elsewhere, it corrupted morality, and, by preventing the growth of respect for man as man, accustomed men to cruelty and bloodshed.

Hence arose a licence of speech and action common to all the Greek States, whatever their constitution, but to which, since the extinction of slavery in the Southern States of America, modern society supplies no parallel. Assassination was the frequent resource of an angry faction, especially of the oligarchical faction;[2] a street brawl soon turned to a sedition—a sedition to a revolution. Pride, insolence, violence, ambition, are the characteristic vices, not of democracy—whose tendency rather is to depress the individual and make him a mere unit in the mass—but of oligarchy; and it is just because the Greek republics were not truly democracies, but

[1] It was one of the merits of democratic Athens that free labour was held in more respect and the slave more kindly treated there than in any other State of Greece.

[2] Political assassinations were, both in Greece and Rome, almost always the work of the oligarchical party. The murder of Ephialtes, and the ferocious terrorism of the Athenian oligarchs recorded in the eighth book of Thucydides, the murder of tribune Genucius at Rome, and the deeds of Kæso Quinctius and his associates, are only a few among many instances.

oligarchies more or less narrow—oligarchies of a few free citizens in the midst of a host of slaves and subjects—that their peace was so often troubled, and the lustre of their patriotism so dimmed and sullied, by these oligarchic vices.

III. Slavery, although the most conspicuous, was but one among the many differences in social and economical condition which place the ancient republics at an infinite distance from ourselves. With us, for example, the business of war has long ago been committed to a standing army, in the management of which Parliament scarcely interferes; among the Greeks the army was a national militia, in whose ranks, or else in the national fleet, every citizen was bound to serve. Our domestic politics are but little affected by those of foreign countries; whereas the constitution of every Greek city was constantly threatened by the hostility of powerful neighbours, who maintained intimate relations with the malcontents within its walls. Even in the greatest of the Greek democracies—States like Athens or Syracuse—the elements of the governing population were few, and its composition simple, when compared with that of the peoples of modern Europe. There were but two classes, the rich and the poor; each class homogeneous: there was wanting that complexity which the presence of so many religious sects, each with its own organization, the existence of a vast variety of interests, manufacturing, commercial, agricultural and capitalist, the strength of local feeling in different parts of a wide territory—one may even add the diversity of races which still preserve their peculiar manners and habits of thought—have created and seem long destined to maintain in modern England. We

should vainly seek in Greece for any institutions comparable to those great learned professions which give so much stability to English society and English politics; bodies enjoying vast power, highly conservative, and highly tenacious of their privileges.

IV. There is yet another difference between ancient and modern communities, more profound than any of those mentioned above, although its workings are too subtle and too manifold to be traced out in detail. This is the difference of religion. That belief in the unity of mankind which Christianity created in proclaiming the unity of God—that feeling of a human brotherhood which the Gospel of love brought with it, a brotherhood that transcends every distinction of race or colour, of estate or privilege—was to the Greeks unknown. Among them the man was nothing, the citizen was everything. War was held to be the natural condition of States towards one another; peace the exception: a stranger was everywhere what the language of the Romans expressly entitled him, —an enemy: out of his own State no man had any rights, and might thank the contemptuous clemency of the city in which he found himself if it suffered him to dwell unmolested. Hence the moral and spiritual bond which now links men together was wholly wanting; and in its place there stood only the sentiment—intense, yet far more shallow—of a local patriotism, the tradition of a common ancestry, the gratification of personal pride in the greatness of the city. These feelings were strong; but just as there are no enmities so bitter as the enmities of relatives, so when two factions, pent within the compass of one city wall, were struggling for the mastery, the scorn and violence of the rich, the envious hatred of

the poor, found no such check as is imposed upon Christian communities by the belief in the equality of all mankind before God, and the reverence for a humanity which is sacred, because created in the Divine image.

The influence of these primary beliefs, or the absence of them, in determining the character and conduct of a nation, appears most clearly when we turn from the actual politics of Greece to the speculations of her philosophers. It is the fashion to call Plato and Aristotle as witnesses against democracy. It would be well if those who quote Plato were also to let their audience know that Plato proposed to exclude from political power all but a very few choice spirits who had been subjected to a long and laborious course of intellectual training. When they appeal to Aristotle's low estimate of the artisan class, they might add that Aristotle held slavery to be a natural and necessary institution, grounded on the worthlessness of the great mass of mankind;[1] and that he declared manual labour to be *ipso facto* a disqualification for civic rights, and wished to see every working man a slave.[2] It is no reproach to the greatest minds

[1] Aristotle's argument for slavery is in substance the same as that whereby the enemies of Reform justify the exclusion of the English working class. He holds the mass of mankind to be so degraded that the best thing for them is to be subject to the will of a master. They assert that the poor are so degraded that they must continue to be ruled by the rich. Neither he nor they seem to see that this degradation which they allege as the cause of slavery in the one case, of exclusion in the other, is also the necessary result thereof. Aristotle's view was natural enough. But it might have been expected that those who paint in such dark colours the condition of the English working man would at least exert themselves to better it, and would hold out to him the distant hope of enfranchisement. They have shown no disposition to do either.

[2] Not only the handicraftsmen but the whole agricultural population: *τοὺς γεωργήσοντας μάλιστα μέν, εἰ δεῖ κατ' εὐχήν, δούλους εἶναι ἀνάγκη, ... δεύτερον δὲ βαρβάρους περιοίκους παραπλησίους τοῖς εἰρημένοις τὴν φύσιν.* —Polit. vii. 10.

of their age—perhaps of any age—to have adopted principles for which the state of the world, as it then stood, seemed to furnish good grounds. But it was from such principles that their condemnation of the government of the many was derived; and he who conceals because he dare not avow their premisses, has no right to appeal to their conclusions. Nor is it true that the censures of Aristotle and Plato were in any special manner levelled against democracy. They denounce the government of wealth quite as earnestly as that of numbers; for they hold both of them to be tainted by the same faults—that the government is not for the sake of all, but of the ruling power, and that it is not conducted by the wisest citizens. What they desired, and what Plato—more sanguine, or at least more imaginative, than his great disciple—seems to have hoped through an elaborate system of institutions to realize, was an Aristocracy—a government of the wisest, justest, and most pure-minded men—based not upon force, but on the respect and willing obedience of their fellow-citizens. To Aristocracy, in this its true and original sense, no system can be more directly opposed than the plutocratic oligarchy which is openly or covertly advocated by the enemies of Reform. And Aristotle is so far from favouring this or any other similar oligarchy, that he more than once distinctly declares it to be worse than democracy—more selfish, more unjust, and more liable to provoke sedition.[1]

There is another line of argument which I have not

[1] Arist. Pol. iv. 11. *αἱ δημοκρατίαι ἀσφαλέστεραι τῶν ὀλιγαρχιῶν εἰσὶ καὶ πολυχρονιώτεραι διὰ τοὺς μέσους, πλείους τὲ γάρ εἰσι καὶ μᾶλλον μετέχουσι τῶν τιμῶν ἐν ταῖς δημοκρατίαις ἢ ἐν ταῖς ὀλιγαρχίαις.* Cf. vi. 12, *αἱ πλεονεξίαι τῶν πλουσίων ἀπολλύουσι μᾶλλον τὴν πολιτείαν ἢ αἱ τοῦ δήμου.* And cf. Thuc. viii. 48, 49.

thought it necessary to follow out—that of examining the oligarchical and monarchical governments of Greece, to see how far they deserved better of the world than her popular republics. It would be no more difficult to make out a bill of indictment against oligarchy in England, or monarchy in Prussia, from the history of oligarchic Thebes or Corinth, of Cyrene under the house of Battus, or of Syracuse under Dionysius and his son, than it is to enumerate the sins of the Athenian populace, and lay them at the door of the English working class. But it would be no less unjust, for oligarchy in a small State differs as much from oligarchy in a large one, as does democracy. It is fair, however, and not only fair but necessary, to require those who judge the Greek democracies to judge them in relation to the circumstances of their own time, not of ours; and to weigh their faults and merits against those of the oligarchies and the great monarchies which surrounded them. It needs no long deliberation to strike the balance. In Greece, the government of the few had vices greater than those of the government of the many, and lacked its redeeming virtues. In those oligarchic States of which Sparta and Thebes are types, we find secrecy, perfidy, suspicion; a policy consistent indeed, but consistent in its meanness and its selfishness; a system of repression, which denied free speech to the citizen, and never scrupled at assassination or massacre to maintain its ascendency. The Athenian people were hasty and excitable, but they were faithful to their engagements; they respected and upheld the constitution under which they lived; they were accessible to generous impulses, and capable, on occasion, of rare and noble magnanimity;

they were lenient to slaves and subjects; they gave to the rich and well-born more than their full share of the offices of State, and required from them only what they were least willing to render—an honest obedience to the laws, a frank acceptance of social and political equality. When Athens fell, after two centuries of glorious life, she fell not from intestine commotions, but because neither she nor any single Greek state could resist the military strength of the Macedonian kings. And after her decline, the torch of liberty was taken up by the Federal Democracy of Achaia, founded on a broader basis, and therefore more secure from foreign enemies as well as domestic plots. Avoiding many of the faults of the Athenian constitution, this Federation showed that democracy, even among the vivacious Greeks, was not inconsistent with a wise and stable government. It secured a century and a half of freedom and prosperity to Peloponnesus, and it only yielded, when all the world was yielding, to the overmastering power of Rome.

The history of Rome is sometimes appealed to as an instance of that alleged law, according to which democracy is followed by despotism. Between England and Rome there is, no doubt, a truer analogy, both as respects size and political character, than between England and the States of Greece. But Rome proves even less against popular government, for Rome was never, in any sense of the word, a democracy. There was a democratic element in her constitution—the assemblies of the centuries and of the tribes, by which magistrates were appointed and laws enacted. But the administrative government and the real substance of power was, at all times, in the hands of the oligarchy—a body of

nobles marked off from the rest of the community in the earlier centuries of the city by their birth, and in the later ones by official rank, itself the prize of wealth. From the time of the Punic wars onwards, the oligarchy was virtually a plutocracy. The powers which in theory belonged to the whole people were in practice wielded by the Senate, and by the great magistrates, socially members of the oligarchy, and usually its creatures and partisans. Hence it was only occasionally and spasmodically, in moments of extraordinary excitement, that the democratic spirit asserted itself, and forced its leaders into a position which they wanted the experience to use wisely. For the most part it remained a mere Opposition, justly disaffected, but unable to do more than mutter threats of future vengeance. The result of this system was the gradual separation of rich and poor into two hostile camps. The oligarchy, like all oligarchies, was selfish; the spoils of Sicily and Africa and the East had enriched it beyond measure, and enabled it to draw all the land into its own hands. Thus the race of hardy yeomen, who had formed the strength of the Roman Commonwealth, was suffered to die out (just as it is dying out in England) with the growth of large properties, till at last the people came to consist of the idle and dissolute mob of the capital. Meantime the progress of Roman conquest had made the great magistracies—involving as they did the rule of a province for several years—so lucrative that no price was too high to be paid for them. This price was paid in bribes to the mob—a traffic which degraded the giver as well as the receiver; public morality became a jest; and, since there was no longer a true Roman Commonwealth, there was an end also of that patriotic devotion

to the glory of the city which had tempered the contests of an earlier age. When the oligarchy had destroyed, in the persons of the Gracchi, the last hope of constitutional reform, legal means of redress were abandoned: when a party-triumph was marked by a massacre, and revolution succeeded revolution, it was plain that the end could not be far off. Had there been any powerful rival to assail her, had there been a Pyrrhus or a Hannibal in Italy, Rome might have fallen. But as her foreign conquests had outrun her internal decay, and she found herself sole mistress of a prostrate world, events took a different turn. The first and greatest necessity of the time was the establishment of an efficient provincial administration. The oligarchy, corrupted by luxury and self-indulgence, had no longer the intellectual or moral vigour that could organize a system of government for the provinces; the democratic party was only a fitful opposition, and could do it even less; no course remained but to throw vast powers into the hands of general after general, until at last one of them used his unequalled genius to destroy what was left of the old constitution, and erect upon its ruins an absolute monarchy.

That the Roman republic decayed and died was due to the canker of slavery, to the separation of her citizens into millionaires and beggars, to a moral corruption which increased with every increase in wealth and civilization. That in dying the republic gave birth to a military despotism was caused partly by her imperial position, as mistress of a world whose first need was union, and which only force gathered in a single hand could keep together; but still more by the neglect of her rulers to widen and develop old institutions to

meet the new conditions of her growth and territorial extension. Therefore Imperialism was the child, not of democracy, but of an oligarchy whose selfish incapacity had made other forms of government impossible.

"France, however," the opponents of Reform may be heard to say, "France at least shows what democracy brings you to sooner or later." France is a memorable and terrible example of political ruin. But the moral which her history teaches is, as De Tocqueville has so convincingly proved, not the evils of democracy, but the evils of a democratic state of society without a democratic government; the danger of permitting changes to pass upon the thoughts and feelings and social condition of a nation without introducing such corresponding changes in its institutions as may make them conformable to its character, a faithful expression of its life and growth. In the thirteenth century, France, like the other countries of Western Europe, was a feudal monarchy, whose government was practically in the hands of the nobles. The course of events from that time on gradually withdrew authority from them and transferred it to the king, so that, in the time of Louis the Sixteenth, the aristocracy had only a number of offensive and oppressive privileges; the people had no political rights whatever; and the whole powers of the State were exercised by the sovereign through a highly centralized and highly despotic administration. In the eighteenth century, literary men and philosophers (so-called) began to discuss political questions, and found in the existing arrangements nothing but absurdity and injustice. The aristocracy had lost all intellectual influence, and the bulk of the nation, suffering from grievous misgovernment, were glad to be told that

they might despise what they already hated. All classes and parties, knowing nothing of the difficulties of actual politics, believed a radical change to be not only desirable, but easy and simple. Then the Revolution came. The old monarchy collapsed in a moment; and men rejoiced to see it gone, and the ground clear for that new Temple of Liberty which they hoped to erect. Unfortunately the ground was only too clear. The people, who had for many centuries been accustomed to be governed, found themselves unable to govern, or even to choose their governors. The want of local institutions had left them without the power of organizing or combining, without trust in one another, without the means of knowing who were the wisest and the worthiest among them. Distinctions of birth had been so abused that they made their possessors odious; literary distinction was no warrant of political capacity. Thus the Revolution advanced in a wild, furious way; and the government, so far from being democratic, fell into the hands of a knot of enthusiasts, whose violent counsels had won for them the confidence of the Parisian mob, and who ruled, by means of emissaries sent throughout the provinces, over a distraught and helpless nation. At length the destructive impulse spent itself; and when the flood began to return from off the earth, the first object which appeared above the receding waters was the administrative system of the old monarchy, still centralized, still fitted to become what Napoleon made it, a tremendous engine of despotism in the hands of a military autocrat. By this system France has since then been ruled. Thrice the dynasty has been changed, once by foreign intervention, twice by a popular outbreak. But the effect of each convulsion has

been only momentary. The want of free local institutions has, on every occasion, restored to the central authority that overwhelming power which the dethroned ruler had abused and forfeited; the people have gained no practical knowledge of politics; and whether under king, republic, or emperor, the country has never ruled itself, but always been ruled by its centralized adminis tration.

That the present government of France is not only a tyranny, but a tyranny of military force, is not to be charged on democracy, but on the crimes of the old monarchy. The reign of Louis the Fourteenth gave the nation a taste for war and aggression which has never left it and which was revived in full force by the victories of the first Napoleon. In A.D. 1851 the President of the Republic was trusted—madly trusted, as one can see after the event—with the command of an enormous army, which looked on him as the heir of the hero it worships. Relying on its support, he overthrew the constitution, imprisoned the leaders of the Assembly, and struck terror into the Parisians by an unprovoked massacre. When this was done, resistance was at an end, for there were no local bodies to organize a struggle for liberty. And the middle classes of the provinces, who still shudder at the recollections of the first Revolution, preferred tyranny and order to a civil war.

Throughout these eighty years that have passed since the fall of her ancient monarchy, France has been but reaping the fruits of the three centuries that preceded. Not freedom, but the want of it; not democracy, but the absence of local democratic institutions, and of the capacity to create and work them; not the over-activity of the people, but their passivity which throws everything

into the hands of the Government, and their seeming willingness to sacrifice free speech and a free press for the sake of "glory" and a commanding position in Europe—these are the causes which keep France at once unsettled and enslaved—unable to retain liberty, unable to support the want of it.

There remain several other historical examples of democracy which are sometimes appealed to in our political discussions, and notably those of the Italian republics and of Switzerland. It would be easy to show, as regards the former, that they were never in theory, and very imperfectly even in practice, free and sovereign States; that their organization by trade-guilds was of a municipal rather than a political character; that it was not truly democratic, inasmuch as the labouring class was excluded from power; and that the presence of a turbulent nobility within and without the city-walls made it impossible to establish a well-balanced constitutional government, since it threw powers dangerously large into the hands of the magistrate. The Swiss Confederation is not only the sole true and pure democracy of modern Europe; it is a signal example of the value of democratic institutions among a people capable of using them. In most of its cantons, the most perfect social equality and the fullest development of individual liberty is combined with a strong and stable Government, under which the wealthy and well-born receive their full share of power and influence, while the mass of the population has risen to a point of prosperity and intelligence incomparably superior to that of their neighbours who live under the despotism of France or the paternal monarchies of Southern Germany. Switzerland, no doubt, enjoys

certain advantages for the working of popular institutions which England does not possess. But it might be shown —if the limits allotted to this Essay did not make it impossible to pursue the subject further—that in establishing her present constitution she also has had difficulties to surmount and has successfully surmounted them—difficulties at least as great as any that can be in store for England.[1]

[1] An eminent historian, whose studies and travels have made him familiar with the practical working of Swiss politics (Mr. E. A. Freeman), writes to me as follows:—"From all that I can hear, the rich in Switzerland—not that there are many people whom we should count rich—have no real grievances. Wherever, as at Zürich, the old aristocracy have frankly accepted the new state of things, and have taken their chance along with other folk, they have got their share like other folk. At Bern, for a long time they were sulky and held aloof; more fools they, as in many parts of the Canton they were distinctly popular, and would have been preferred to other candidates. * * At Neuchâtel I stayed with the Baron de ——, a member of the old aristocracy, whose only grievance, so far as I could make out, was, that he had been compelled to sell some tithes. He seemed to be in exactly the position of an English squire, people capping him and calling him 'M. le Baron.' He was, by election, President of the Communal Council, and his son was a member of the Legislature of the Canton. So I really did not see that his hardships were very great. * * In the establishment of democracy in the Confederation, and in many of the Cantons, there were difficulties which we have not here in England. Here no class, no district, is actually the subject of any other class or district; a man has only to acquire the requisite property, and his full political rights cannot be denied him. But under the old League the greater part of the country had no political rights at all; cities ruled over districts and over other cities, and the cities, again, were often themselves ruled by hereditary oligarchies. And burghership and patricianship being hereditary, a man could not rise to a higher political rank, except by special grant. * * To sweep away all these hereditary distinctions was a much stronger measure than any possible extension of the franchise would be here. Yet it has answered completely. Then people are constantly saying, that in a democracy any stable government is impossible, that Australian ministries change every week, and so forth. The *Times* said that no democracy ever did or could allow its Executive to remain in office a whole year. This sounded strange to me when I read it just after being at the Landesgemeinde of Outer-Appenzell, where the old Landamman fairly ran away as his only chance of escaping re-election. But it is stranger still when we think of

The chief purpose of the foregoing remarks has been to show that the differences between the circumstances of England and of those other States, ancient and modern, in which democracy has, or is supposed to have, prevailed, are such that no arguments drawn from their experience are of any value as enabling us to predict its possible results here. The Greek republics were small; their internal politics were constantly disturbed by those of their neighbours and enemies; their assemblies were immediate, not representative; the structure of their society was simple, and wanted those elements of stability and resistance which exist in ours. They were, moreover, Slave States, and therefore not truly democratic; they despised labour, and set but little value upon human life. Being polytheists, the Greeks had a low conception of the Divinity, and therefore a low one of humanity likewise: their religion, graceful and beautiful as were its forms, was to the mass of the people a superstition, to some few an amusement, to none either the moral basis of life or a bond of spiritual union

these facts. The Federal Executive of Switzerland is the Bundesrath, a council of seven. Every three years, at the beginning of each new Diet, they come to an end, but are open to re-election. This has gone on since 1848, giving six elections since, at any of which the whole Bundesrath might have been turned out of office. Instead of this (though, of course, several changes have taken place through death and retirement), only *twice* has a member of the Council who sought for re-election failed to obtain it. At the election last year, one member retired, two were opposed, but they were elected nevertheless. Against the other four did not a dog move his tongue. Can any monarchy show anything so stable? What ministry in England, or elsewhere, has kept in for nineteen years? I have not seen enough of Cantonal politics to say whether the Cantonal Executives are equally stable. But the Legislatures are, I believe, invariably chosen by universal suffrage (unless where Jews have been shut out, and such like), and the general complaint seems to be that they are too conservative."

with their fellows. Rome was an oligarchy, first of birth, then of wealth and office, ruling over, yet tempered by, a democracy of yeomen, which to her own ruin and theirs she turned at last into a profligate city mob. While she strove for existence and for victory, patriotism and the excitement of the struggle kept these discordant elements together. When the world lay prostrate at her feet, the chasm between rich and poor had grown too wide to be bridged over; the oligarchy, in losing virtue and public spirit, had lost wisdom and self-control; and nothing remained but a despotism which could merge the Roman republic in the empire of the world. The mediæval republics were rather municipalities than sovereign States: they partook of the violence and the exclusiveness of the feudal society out of which they rose, and were too much absorbed in striving to maintain themselves against it to have time to frame any regular constitutions. Florence alone has a free history; and Florence, like Athens, perished in defending herself, with true republican heroism, against overwhelming force. It would not be hard to show that in each of these cases, and notably in those of Athens and Florence, the Free States, when tried by the standard of their own age, appear nobler and happier than any other. If then we are entitled to draw any inference from the records of their life, it is an inference favourable to the extension of political privilege to those classes of our countrymen which do not now enjoy it. But this line of argument, although interesting in a speculative point of view, has, for the reasons already given, too little practical value to be worth following out in detail. For it is the purpose of this Essay not so much to state the merits which may

be claimed for democracy as to show the unfairness of the common arguments against it. People say, "How can any one wish to give democracy in England? Democracy has often been tried, and wherever it has been tried it has failed." Such a statement is doubly false. In its proper sense—the only sense which can be assigned to it in English political discussions—democracy has never yet been tried, except in Switzerland and in America—one may perhaps add, in Norway. In that looser sense wherein it is taken to denote a more popular as opposed to a more exclusive constitution, it has uniformly produced greater energy, higher virtues, a more generally diffused happiness, and more brilliant achievements in literature and art than any of the other forms of government which have in past times existed alongside of it. The so-called democratic republics of antiquity and of the Middle Ages do not prove much in favour of democracy in England. But they certainly prove nothing against it.

It may however be asked, "Are then the conclusions of history all negative, and does she do nothing more for those who interrogate her than proclaim her impotence to help them? If history is in any sense a science, must there not be certain truths which experience has placed beyond doubt, and which, be they never so wide and general, have some direct application to the circumstances of all states and societies?" That there are such truths all students of history would probably agree in holding. But as to what they are, and still more as to the manner of stating and attempting to apply them, great differences of opinion exist among the highest authorities; differences which may expose to the charge of presumption any one who

ventures to touch upon so vast and so intricate a subject. It is therefore with the greatest diffidence, and with a disagreeable consciousness of having to state abruptly propositions many of which need explanation as well as proof, that I shall attempt to note and call attention to some points in which history seems to throw light on the political situation of England.

Upon one thing at least all are agreed. History holds no form of government to be absolutely the best, for to her all things are relative. She recognises, as distinctly as any utilitarian or constitutionalist could wish, that every proposal of political change is a question to be discussed not on abstract grounds, but with reference to the particular States and nations in question; not because abstract principles are untrue or unimportant, but because they are applicable under such a variety of restrictions and modifications that their establishment carries us but a very little way towards the solution of any practical problem. Nevertheless, History does indicate a certain progress of the race in political matters; she declares some systems to belong to the past, and others to the future; she sets before us the excellences and defects which are found to characterise each type of constitution, and explains the relation which each bears to the character and circumstances of the nation among whom it prevails.

I. Thus it is undeniable that democracy—the participation of the whole nation in the direction of its own affairs—has a stimulating power such as belongs to no other form of government. By giving the sense of a common interest and purpose it gives unity and strength to the whole State; it rouses the rich and

powerful by obliging them to retain their influence not by privilege so much as by energy and intellectual eminence; it elevates the humbler classes by enlarging their scope of vision and their sense of responsibility. Corruption and a direct interest in politics seem in the case of the poor to be in inverse ratio to one another. The Roman populace at the end of the republic was corrupt, because, although it had political rights, it lacked any motive to guide it in using them. Being a pauper mob, with nothing to gain for itself except corn to feed and pageants to amuse it, it did not care whom its votes sent to rule in Spain and Asia, and therefore sold those votes to the highest bidder. The Athenian Demos was not corrupt, because it was interested in the goodness of the officers it chose and the success of the measures it sanctioned. So too, it may be argued, the corruption of English voters arises in great part from their want of interest in or conception of the nature of the functions they are called to exercise, and will diminish the more their class feels itself to have a share in the government of the country.[1]

II. Again, experience shows that the less a State mingles in international politics, and, in particular, the less she involves herself in foreign wars, so much the more pressing do questions respecting the internal distribution of privileges tend to become. When the existence of a nation is imperilled from without, and the war spirit is fairly kindled, national feeling rises so high that even oppressive Governments are acquiesced in. The course

[1] Some, of course, hold that they will remain indifferent, and therefore corrupt. But those who argue thus are at least precluded from terrifying us with the prospect of a working class which shall tyrannize over all others.

of events in Prussia during the last few months, is a signal instance. Now it cannot be doubted that national feeling—in the old exclusive sense—has been constantly diminishing in England, and is, under a policy of non-intervention, not likely to be revived by war. The cohesion which external pressure used to give—as conspicuously during the great wars with Spain and France—being thus withdrawn, the need of internal reconcilement becomes all the greater.

III. The experience of all times and countries condemns class government as inherently bad, because inherently selfish. One form of it—a form which the arguments used to defend it in England would go far to justify—is the rule of freemen over slaves, and we know what that ends in. But in any form the thing can never be good unless it is unavoidable. It can never be proper for one class to tell another that for their own sake they must be governed and kept under. If the subject population are so degraded that the statement is true, then it is needless. If they are sufficiently advanced to understand and care about it, they will not believe and will most certainly resent it. Where greatly superior intelligence and elevation of character coincide with superior power, the upper class must and legitimately may govern, for its rule will rest not on material strength merely, but upon the respect and reverence of the subjects. In this lay the justification of the sway of the feudal aristocracy during the Middle Ages, and of the heroic aristocracy of primitive Greece: their political ascendency was the necessary result of that veneration for birth which is proper to half-civilized man, and of the aptitude for command which the habit of command cultivates. An

oligarchy of wealth[1] is supported by no such feeling on the part of those who do not belong to it, and can claim

[1] How completely English society and politics appeared, to a singularly unprejudiced observer, to be pervaded and governed by the influence of wealth, may be seen from the following extract from the volume of De Tocqueville's posthumous works, entitled "Notes et Voyages:"—

"Il faut être riche pour être ministre, puisque la représentation à laquelle les mœurs obligent les ministres leur fait dépenser beaucoup plus d'argent qu'ils n'en reçoivent de l'État, et cela se conçoit sans peine, puisqu'un ministre en Angleterre est forcé de vivre au milieu d'un monde politique tout plein de splendeur.

"Il faut être riche pour être juge de paix, lord lieutenant, haut shériff, maire, overseer of the poor, puisque ces places ne sont point rétribuées.

"Il faut être riche pour être avocat et juge, puisque l'éducation qui mène à ces deux professions est extrêmement chère.

"Il faut être riche pour être ecclésiastique, puisqu'il faut aussi, pour le devenir, s'être procuré une éducation dispendieuse.

"Il faut être riche pour être plaideur, car celui qui ne peut donner caution doit aller en prison. Il n'y a pas de pays dans le monde où la justice, ce premier besoin du peuple, soit plus le privilége des riches. Au-delà du juge de paix, il n'existe pas de tribunaux pour le pauvre.

"Enfin, pour acquérir cette richesse, qui est la clef de tout le reste, le riche a encore des grands priviléges, puisqu'il trouve plus facilement des capitaux ou des situations qui leur permettent de s'enrichir encore lui-même ou d'enrichir ses parents.

"Comment s'étonner du culte de ce peuple pour l'argent? L'argent n'est pas seulement le signe représentatif de la richesse, mais du pouvoir, mais de la considération, mais de la gloire. Aussi, tandis que le Français dit: *un tel a cent mille francs de rente*, l'Anglais dit: *un tel vaut cent mille livres de rente* (he is worth four thousand pounds a year).

"Les mœurs vont plus loin encore dans ce sens que les lois; ou plutôt les lois ont modelé les mœurs sur elles.

"L'esprit, la vertu même, paraissent peu de chose sans l'argent. L'argent se mêle à tous les mérites, et s'y incorpore en quelque sorte. Il comble tous les vides qui peuvent se trouver entre les hommes, mais rien ne saurait les suppléer.

"Les Anglais n'ont laissé au pauvre que deux droits: celui d'être soumis à la même législation que les riches et de s'égaler à eux en acquérant une richesse égale. Encore ces deux droits ne sont-ils pas plus apparents que réels, puisque c'est le riche qui fait la loi et qui crée à son profit, ou à celui de ses enfants, les principaux moyens d'acquérir la richesse."—*Notes et Voyages*, pp. 345—347. (Paris, 1865.)

It will be seen that this passage is not perfectly correct in all its details, and that changes in the land made since 1835 (the date at which it was written) have diminished the force of one of its illustrations. But in the main it is quite as true and as forcible now as it was then—possibly more so.

their obedience upon no ground except one, which the instinct of every citizen ought to reject—the ground that a State is a trading company, a man's interest in which is proportioned to the capital he has embarked in it. The assumption of all oligarchies that they are also aristocracies has some truth in the case of oligarchies of birth. If an hereditary nobility is preserved by no higher feeling, it is preserved at any rate by honour. In its members we may look for a dignity and elevation of mind, sometimes even for a spirit of self-sacrifice, which their very origin forbids to oligarchies of wealth. Birth will always have a charm for the imagination, wealth can have none; for there is nothing to make the rich man wiser, or juster, or more high-souled than his neighbours; and there are some things to make him seem less so. He may inspire fear, or a hatred that wears the mask of flattery; he will not inspire respect. History does not contain one instance of a plutocracy which has governed for the public good, and which has not perished either by its own luxury and corruption, or by the hatred of its subjects.

If the history of Greece and Rome teaches anything, it teaches us that it is not democracy but the interested government of an upper class which naturally and inevitably produces the worst type of demagogue. This being, who is painted in such dark colours as the destroyer of national peace, is not a wanton manifestation of human wickedness; he is the legitimate consequence of a system which abandons the idea of an undivided Commonwealth, in whose prosperity all citizens are to share, and which substitutes for this conception that of a State composed of different classes with discordant interests, in

which whatever is given to one must be taken from some other, and where the most that can be hoped for is a sort of armed neutrality of naturally hostile powers.

When the rich declare their own interests to be incompatible with those of the rest of the nation, and resolve upon this ground to keep the government, or the chief share in it, to themselves, they give a formal challenge to the poorer part of the community, and oblige it—unless it be wholly helpless—to assert its rights by agitation. Abnegating their own function of leadership for the common good—a function which the poor, when fairly treated, have always been found willing to concede to them—they throw the humbler class into the hands of men who come forward as its advocates and their assailants. Such men may do their work better or worse. They may ally themselves with the more liberal members of the ruling class, and seek to improve and widen the Constitution without destroying its ancient features. Or they may—as happened in Greece and Rome, and might happen even in England were agitation to be long protracted—they may appeal to the lower passions of our nature, and proclaim a war of the poor against the rich. But in either case it is primarily on the mistaken policy of those who rule the State that such agitation must be charged, for experience shows that the working class, unless under the pressure of the severest physical misery, is in a large country[1] comparatively indifferent to political power, and does not clamour for it until irritated by a long course of scornful refusal.

[1] In the small republics of antiquity it was otherwise; and this is one point in which the advantages enjoyed by England appear clearly. Political power was loved there because it could be constantly exercised upon every sort of question.

It is possible to play the part of demagogue to a ruling as well as to a subject class, and he who demands that the voice of the poor should be heard in the councils of the State, is not so dangerous to the public peace as he who flatters the insolence of wealth, and bids it maintain a system which secures its own ascendency.

IV. The tendency of the last seven centuries of European history has been to an equalization of the conditions of men—an equalization not so much (in England at least) of wealth as of physical force, of manners, and of intelligence. The feeling of subordination—that reverence of the lower classes for the upper, which was at once the cause and the justification of the feudal polity—has disappeared; political equality has become a passion in some countries, legal or civil equality is admitted to be necessary in all.[1] Exclusive systems of government are therefore out of date. In enforcing this principle, De Tocqueville is not, what he has sometimes been represented as being, a fatalist who predicts the universal sway of democratic institutions. Applying his argument to England, it would rather seem to be on this wise. Those things which are the bases of political power—knowledge, self-respect, and the capacity for combined action—having formerly been possessed by the few only, are now possessed by the many, and among them by persons who do not enjoy civic privileges, though they feel themselves in every other respect the equals of those who do. Or, in other words, the social progress of democracy has outrun its political progress. This is dangerous, because it makes the organs of our political life no longer an adequate expression of the national will; and because there

[1] Speaking, of course, of civilized communities only.

is nothing more dangerous than a democratic society without democratic institutions. The possessors of power ought therefore to admit others to share it, lest a worse thing befal them—lest class hatreds and jealousies arise, lest the people be alienated from their old institutions; and lest power be at last suddenly and violently seized by hands untrained to use it. The force of this view, which, like all those of its author, is an eminently practical one, founded on a careful observation of the phenomena of his own and other countries, seems to lie in this, that it suggests no vague and random extension of the franchise, but the inclusion of those persons only who are already powerful—powerful not by mere numbers, but also by their intelligence and organization. Once received within the pale of the Constitution, such persons will learn to give their wishes a legitimate expression through its ancient organs: and they will themselves become its defenders if it should ever be threatened by the ignorance or turbulence of that lowest class to whom it is not now possible to entrust electoral rights.

V. The republics of antiquity, as has been said above, were oligarchies of masters among a multitude of slaves. Democracy in its true sense is the product of Christianity, whose principle, asserted from the first and asserted until now, has been the spiritual equality of all men before God. The apostles preached a kingdom which was not of this world; they enjoined submission to the most terrible of despotisms. But their preaching was not therefore the less revolutionary. For the more that any man's mind is penetrated by the Christian spirit, so much the more hateful do class-distinctions and class-exclusions become to him; so much the more faith does he cherish

in the possibility of eventually raising the mass of mankind from their degradation, and making them the partakers of rational freedom. Hence the ideal of a Christian State is a Democracy; a Commonwealth in which wealth is no honour, nor labour any degradation; all whose members are worthy of equal regard, although there be among them a diversity of gifts, and government be assigned to the most gifted; wherein there is no strife of classes, because no divergence of interests, nor any need of coercion, because the law is the expression of their common will, and their will is to seek not their own good, but the good of all. Such a commonwealth, held together not by self-interest, but by the bond of love and the sense of human fellowship, is something higher, something less worldly, than that ideal republic of which Plato dreamt: it is a moral and spiritual rather than a political ideal: it is out of the sphere of politics altogether. But the principles which it embodies are not therefore without their bearing on affairs of civil government. They enter into and tincture all men's views, the views even of those who—like the Socialists of France—least acknowledge the source from whence they come. They supply a standard by which the mind of Europe inclines to try every political scheme, approving or condemning a change according as it seems more or less likely to lead towards this ultimate and confessedly unattainable ideal. Any measure which tends to raise and ennoble the humbler part of the community, which causes the government to be conducted more distinctly in the interests of the country at large, and not of its rulers, which weakens the feeling of class separation, and creates in its place the feeling of a united commonwealth, does in so far satisfy aspira-

tions which are the groundwork of the political faith of modern nations, and gives the State whose constitution is so reformed a firmer hold upon the people, a conscious sense of progress and harmony. To deny the influence of such feelings, or to push them aside as "abstract," is to be blind to what is passing under our own eyes, as well as fatally to misread the history of the last three centuries.

It is not necessary, for the sake of trying to give an apparent completeness to an argument against oligarchy, to go minutely through the history of those States wherein democracy (or something like democracy) and oligarchy have respectively prevailed, showing, what it would be easy to show, that the broader the basis on which free institutions have rested, so much the more stable have they been; whereas the more that any nation has fallen under the control of a dominant class, so much the feebler and duller has its life become. For the object of the foregoing pages has been to present a negative rather than a positive line of reasoning; not to exalt democracy, but to show that the common arguments against it drawn from the experience of other countries are wholly baseless, founded upon fallacies which the slightest knowledge of history is sufficient to dispel. The problems which each nation is given to solve are new problems; and they are problems of the utmost intricacy: their solution is but rendered more difficult by that random historical empiricism in which the opponents of Reform have been wont to indulge. To use the words of a great living historian,[1] "It is true that the history of past centuries ought to be the instructress of the present,

[1] Theodor Mommsen, Römische Geschichte, vol. iii.

but not in the vulgar sense, as if we could by merely turning over the leaves discover the conjunctures of the present in the records of the past; collecting from them the symptoms for a political diagnosis and the specifics for a prescription. It is instructive only so far as the observation of earlier forms of culture reveals the organic conditions of civilization generally; the fundamental forces everywhere alike, the mode of their combination everywhere different; and leads and encourages men not to unreflecting imitation, but to independent reproduction." It is for this reason—it is because Nature is so rich and so bountiful, never repeating herself, but permitting each nation to develop its institutions in a manner conformable to its peculiar character and genius, that one argument drawn from the previous history of a State is worth many arguments drawn from the circumstances of other States, whether past or present. It is, therefore, to the teachings of English history that we have mainly to look; and the teachings of English history cannot be mistaken. Our history is that of a State which suffered no privileged class or person to acquire a dangerous predominance, which reduced the power of the feudal aristocracy by the aid of the Crown, and broke the power of the Crown by the union of the upper and the middle class; to whose citizens, even in times of strife and passion, the greatness of their common country has been dearer than the triumph of their party; whose constitution, free from the first, because based on the civil equality of all citizens, has never ceased to renew and expand itself from age to age. Has that process of development—a development often slow yet always progressive—at length, after so many centuries, reached its final limit? Have

we overthrown the power of the Crown and the power of the feudal nobility, only to fall under the rule of wealth? Is the oligarchy in England, like the oligarchy at Rome in the days of the Gracchi, resolved to hold fast all the power it enjoys, and declare the interests of its class to be the interests of the State? And if so resolved, does it find in the sequel of Roman history much to encourage hopes of an easy victory and a long continued reign?

If there be anything which history declares to be dangerous, it is the failure to recognise a new phase of political growth, the neglect to meet evils which are for ever changing their form by institutions capable of grappling with them. The real danger to England now is not from the working class, for no working class in any country was ever more peaceably disposed than ours is, but from the isolation of classes, caused by the extinction of the yeomanry and the growth of a manufacturing population, and from the alarming increase in the political, and still more in the social, power of wealth. This danger is not to be met by treating classes as hostile bodies, and playing off one against another; still less by maintaining the present oligarchic system, and allowing the rich to engross the administration of the State, and make its laws subserve their interests. Government by a class is always government for a class; a Commonwealth therefore knows nothing of classes, and, while it leaves to the possessors of rank and wealth all the advantages that naturally belong to them, it entrenches them behind no rampart of privilege. If those advantages and all that they imply do not enable them to lead a free nation, they cannot be worthy to lead it: if by pride or selfish indif-

ference to improvement they have lost the confidence of the people, the fault is their own, and theirs the punishment. That confidence has more than once been shaken; it has not yet been lost beyond hope of recall. But it can be preserved only by a broad and hearty measure of reform, one not contrived to defeat itself by crafty subterfuges, one which will not merely whet the appetite it professes to satisfy. Such a reform will be in the spirit of the Constitution, for it will add one more to that long list of timely concessions and wise expansions of old forms to suit new needs, which have kept our Constitution until now enshrined in the reverence of the nation. And it will be made in obedience to the idea which lies at the root of the Constitution, that the State is not an aggregation of classes, but a society of individual men, the good of each of whose members is the good of all. To this idea England strove, in the days of Cromwell and Milton, to give visible form—strove prematurely, indeed, yet with a purity and loftiness of spirit to which history supplies no parallel. And in this idea—one which the people will not forsake unless the rich shall have taught them to forsake it—is to be found the simplest and the most potent safeguard against an unjust exercise of power by rich or poor, for it is the idea of a true Commonwealth—it is at once the condition and the pledge of national unity.

XI.

OPPORTUNITIES AND SHORTCOMINGS OF GOVERNMENT IN ENGLAND.

BY A. O. RUTSON.

ENGLISHMEN regard Parliamentary Government with an admiration that is merited. They justly observe that it produces or encourages among the enfranchised classes an excellent understanding of each other, common sympathies, a habit of co-operation, and mutual confidence; and that, by means of it, such expression is given to the public opinion of those classes, that, as a general rule, all their well-considered wishes and plans speedily become laws.

Few of us, however, sufficiently bear in mind how great have been the shortcomings of our Parliamentary government, even when compared with the achievements of governments which, according to English ideas, are of far inferior efficacy. And the close connexion is little noticed that exists between the shortcomings of Parliament and the political character of the class whose position gives it the largest opportunities, and lays it under the heaviest responsibilities. Moreover, we are

apt altogether to lose sight of the fact that not only is our own the only nation in the world that possesses Parliamentary institutions, but that the whole course of our history, and the social and other circumstances which have descended to us, are exceptional, and exceptionally favourable to progress. They are such that, irrespectively of our Parliamentary institutions, we ought to bring our own political performance to the test of a standard far higher than those by which we should estimate the performance of other nations. And if, under such circumstances, we have fallen short; if some of the most pressing political and social questions have been neglected, and their solution indefinitely postponed; if evils within the reach of legislative remedies have been suffered to gather strength unheeded, there is good ground for thinking that some great but not incurable defects derange the working of the institutions we have inherited.

It will not be denied that England is the only country in which the government has permanently taken the Parliamentary form—if by Parliamentary government is meant the choice of legislators by a greater or smaller number of citizens giving their votes freely, and the responsibility to the legislators so elected of the Executive. In Italy Parliamentary government is a recent experiment; in France it has had a very brief and scarcely a fair trial; the Sovereign and the Peoples of Austria and Hungary are at this moment only approaching an agreement to adopt it; Prussia has a freely-elected Legislature, but not Ministerial Responsibility; and, notwithstanding the exceptions to be found in some of the smaller States, Government by a representative

body may be said to be as untried in Germany as it is in Russia and in Spain. Only in the United States[1] has a form of government at all similar to our own had a fair trial. But Parliamentary government does not exist in a country in which the Executive is changed at fixed intervals, and derives no authority from, and owes no responsibility to, the Legislature.

Our own long-continued possession of Parliamentary government, however, is not the only, nor indeed the most important, fact with reference to which English statesmanship is to be judged. Over and above our Parliamentary government, we enjoy the no less peculiar and no less momentous advantage of being able to look back upon an unbroken history. The greatest revolutions in political and religious ideas have been effected in England without any social convulsion. Our annals record no abrupt changes, no long period of unnatural repression ending in anarchy. There has been a continuous growth and a steady development. The spirit of the nation has never been degraded by a willing or by an enforced submission to any tyranny. Misgovernment, such as has frequently existed for generations in all continental countries, has in England been always unknown. Not only the prolonged dominion of foreigners, but temporary conquest, and even the presence on our soil of a foreign army, has for six centuries been equally unknown. Far different has been the fortune of other countries. National life in Italy was sacrificed, in the first instance, to her splendid and powerful municipalities; subsequently, and until within a few years from

[1] National life in Switzerland is on too small a scale for comparison with England, except in a few particulars.

the present time, to the despotism of strangers or of her own princes. In Germany the divisions of feudalism were confirmed and perpetuated by the weakness of the Empire; and she did not recover for generations from the Thirty Years' War, and from the destruction of wealth, the ruin of cities, the dissolution of society, and the long depression of intellect that followed it. France was the victim, first of English invasions, afterwards of religious wars, later still of absolute monarchy in its worst form. All these calamities, while they lasted, made social progress impossible. Nor did they cease without leaving behind them obstacles to progress scarcely less formidable in the national temper they had fostered or created.

From all such calamities as these our ancestors were free. And thus we are free from the curse of social distrust, and political instability, that such calamities commonly leave for the generations to come. When nations and governments are compared with reference to that which is at once the purpose and the test of political institutions—namely, their progress towards the attainment of a happier lot for the whole of society—the advantages and the obstacles with which each has been favoured or impeded should always be borne in mind. But English politicians are too ready to look upon the favourable circumstances that are mainly the result of our insular position, not as a means of progress, but as themselves the crowning result of our virtue or our energy; as the fruit of Parliamentary institutions, not as concurring with Parliamentary institutions to form a surer basis than other nations possess for social progress.

Nothing, for instance, is more common than to hear the history of our country, since 1815, compared with that of France during the same period; and the freedom we have enjoyed from change and from Imperialism is attributed to the superiority of our institutions, and even to the present limitations of the franchise, and the way in which representatives are allotted to constituencies. But, in truth, the existence of Imperialism in France is due to two causes; from both of which England is free. In the first place, the violent convulsion of 1789–93, which was itself the result of prolonged neglect to accommodate institutions to an altered state of opinion and an altered distribution of social forces, bequeathed to France one lasting obstacle to freedom and progress. To the Revolution France owes a deeply-rooted and wide-spread distrust of the spontaneous action of society. This distrust still lives in the minds of the middle class —that is to say, of that portion of the French nation which is neither educated enough, like a part of the upper classes, to know that the circumstances of 1789 cannot return, nor aspiring enough, like a part of the working class, to desire progress at the risk of some temporary shock to society. It was, therefore, not the political temper that is called "Democracy," nor was it the absence of any English institution, that brought about the catastrophe of 1851. It was the middle class of France—rural and urban — impelled by memories exclusively French, that yielded to a panic-fear of a return of 1789; and, recklessly abandoning itself to a so-called "Saviour of Society," combined with the priests and the population under their influence to sanction the overthrow of the Republic. Thanks to our history,

the middle class of England has no such memories; and because it has no such memories, it is liable to no such panic-fear.

The other cause which contributed to the restoration of Imperialism, is also to be found in the course of French history; and from this, too, England, with her insular history, is free. Two centuries ago, France was the only consolidated State on the European continent, and grouped around her were divided or enslaved nations. Her monarchical government was thus tempted to enter upon schemes of conquest and territorial aggrandizement, and to become what England has never been, a military power. The victories of Louis XIV. created in the French nation a passion for military glory, which has been kept alive by the wars and the memory of Napoleon; and, fifteen years ago, the army and the name of the Emperor contributed largely to the destruction of liberty.

The same spirit of exaggerated self-satisfaction finds expression in constant references to the accidental circumstances which have been favourable to the progress of the United States, while the circumstances that are unfavourable to their progress are overlooked. It is seldom noticed, for instance, that the least happy countries of the Old World are constantly pouring into the United States a multitude, unfamiliar with their institutions, and unaccustomed to any form of political freedom; that this immigrant multitude are the children, often, of degraded parents, and almost always uneducated: that the immense material resources of a new country have bad as well as good effects upon political and social progress: that the temptation to subdue the wilderness,

to open mines, to take a part in the immense traffic that carries the produce of the New World to the factories and the markets of the Old, has immense power over men nurtured in traditions of poverty, and the offspring of ancestors trained in the labour of the hand, and not of the brain; and so turns the mind of the nation unduly from intellectual labour to material occupations, to the lower rather than to the higher side of social life: that amidst the din and the hurry which attend the building up of a new society, and the feverish haste to seize new opportunities of wealth, the wonder rather is that so many live their lives withdrawn from the turmoil, and that so much is done in America to further the work of thought and science, on which the progress of the world depends.

In England there is the reverse of this. The history and the present condition of English society not only afford sure ground and manifold helps for progress; they render the danger—if danger there be—of the enfranchisement of the working class smaller here than in any other country in the world. English society is compactly knit. Its accumulated wealth is vast. Much of it, it is true, is in a few hands; but an immense middle class, growing every day in numbers and in resources, including the most thrifty and intelligent of the artisans, and thence extending upwards to the verge of the aristocracy, divides among hundreds of thousands of families by far the larger part of this accumulated wealth. And these families, by their sense of a common interest, by their intelligence, and the excellent understanding that prevails among them, are capable of most powerful co-operation. In newer countries labour is

almost supreme; in England the power of capital is so great, that labour obtains its bare rights with difficulty. Moreover, many families have for generations kept aloof from material business and commercial rivalry, either content with a moderate fortune, or the possessors of great inherited estates. We have a splendid literature, and each generation produces works not altogether unworthy of its predecessors. We are especially distinguished in history and in political economy, the sciences most directly helpful to government. The power of men who think is a great social power; in this, compared with newer countries, the men who think are many. The power of men of wealth is a great social power; here it is fortified by the traditions and the habits of many generations. Men of wealth, and especially of territorial wealth, have long been accustomed to take the lead; and the recognition of their authority has served to confirm it, while the habit of leading has generated the qualities that make it easy to accept their leadership.

The stability and the power of such a society can scarcely be exaggerated. Compared with other societies it is strong, not merely in the character of its political institutions, but in its comparative freedom from the illusions and the passions which, in past times, have led astray other nations and dominant classes in our own, and which even now have not everywhere ceased to operate. When it is said that we have (in respect of its control over the Executive) a fully developed representative government, and no passion for military glory; that we have an unbroken history and a social order inherently strong; that we have a large class devoted to intellectual pursuits, and innumerable personal and local

centres for political action,—we name advantages, some of which we share with other nations, but in the possession of the whole of which we stand alone.

Nor have they been wholly barren of results. From the abolition of most religious tests, the Municipal Reform Act, the reform of the Tariff, the repeal of the Corn Law, the Factories' Acts, the Acts favouring the formation of joint-stock companies, the repeal of the taxes on knowledge, the French Treaty—there has resulted a great increase in the national wealth, some amelioration of the condition of the poor, much softening of the distinctions and the animosities of class and creed.

But to those, at least, who bear in mind the immense opportunities of our country, and how our history has fashioned us for legislative achievements and social progress, it will seem more instructive to dwell on what has not been achieved. The joyless lives of the cultivators of the soil, the scantiness of popular education, the neglect of the Universities and of the higher education,[1] the misery of Ireland,[2] the overcrowding of our great towns,

[1] The beneficent legislation of Parliament in 1854, with respect to the University of Oxford, is not forgotten. But the waste in sinecure offices of revenues needed for learning, and the inability of the University and its colleges at once to elevate and to satisfy the requirements of the nation, is a matter which still urgently needs the attention of Parliament.

[2] The statesmanship of no country is under a darker cloud than that which has fallen on our own through the misgovernment of Ireland. The Government of St. Petersburg obstructs the development of Poland; but it does this, because for dynastic and imperial purposes it has resolved to crush the national life of Poland, and to make her people Russians. The resolution may be a crime, but the destruction of everything national in Poland, and the extinction of her upper and middle classes, being the only means available for that criminal purpose, are, however wicked we may think them, no blot on Russian statesmanship. The Government of Vienna, again, for many years, disregarded the interest and the wishes of Hungary, and placed the education of its other best provinces under the control of the Jesuits. But that Govern-

the nurture of families in ignorance and crime, large tracts of legislation unopened,—these things startle foreign statesmen. But when we compare our own opportunities and resources with theirs; when we remember that, notwithstanding all our extraordinary advantages, it is only in the South and Centre of Italy, in parts of the Austrian dominions, in Spain, and in Russia, that we can find anything worse, and in no other European country anything so bad, we are compelled to ask how it is that so little has been accomplished.

In the first place, it is important to remark that the reforms which have been accomplished have been mainly the work of the large towns. Individual members of the Territorial Aristocracy have indeed rendered valuable assistance. But as a class, the Territorial Aristocracy have employed their vast political power to oppose the reforms that have been accomplished, and to uphold the abuses that have been suffered to continue. It would

ment was a Government which had shut itself out from enlightenment; and its Hungarian policy was not so much a blunder in statesmanship, as a part of the tactics adopted for the attainment of a purpose which, no doubt, was not less unjust than it has proved impracticable. But the misgovernment of Ireland is a case different in all respects from these. There is no Englishman who wishes Irishmen to be less Irish, or who does not in all respects wish Ireland well. In Ireland there are probably not 1,000 educated men who do not accept the rule of Queen Victoria and the authority of the Imperial Parliament. But, in obedience to the prejudices of the smallest but most powerful class in English society, and through the culpable carelessness of the rest of the enfranchised classes, the State-Church has been maintained, and has served to keep alive in Ireland bitter memories of conquest and national degradation. And, through the operation of the same causes—supposed interest or prejudice on the one hand, and indifference on the other, no effort has been made—at least, till last year no serious effort had been made—to give the Irish the benefit of those legislative enactments which Edmund Spenser 300 years ago declared, and which since the time of Adam Smith have been universally acknowledged, to be necessary, if you would change a restless and idle into an industrious, thrifty, and contented people.

seem that, but for the Parliamentary influence of the great towns, no progress at all (except such as is independent of legislation) might have been made in England during the present century. And this great service has been rendered to the Nation by the upper class in the large towns, notwithstanding their busy lives and the drawback of a most imperfect education. Their class has been for centuries excluded or estranged from the national Universities. And the State has done nothing to supply them with worthy schools nearer home. Yet hitherto they have done more for England than the possessors of inherited influence, and the monopolists of the higher education. Even the middle class of the large towns, notwithstanding the narrowness of sympathy and unintelligence with which it is charged, co-operated in these reforms: without its aid they could not have been accomplished.

But undue reliance must not be placed on the urban middle class. No doubt life in cities, at least when it is accompanied by circumstances in any degree favourable, is an admirable school. Intercourse and experience, the collision of mind with mind and class with class, bear fruit in an open-mindedness and width of sympathy unknown in a less active society; and these enable men to pass sometimes beyond the sphere of their immediate circumstances, and to give their minds to questions involving principles of justice or of policy; although such questions may not directly or obviously affect themselves. But then it must be remembered how great are the special drawbacks to the political capacity of the urban middle class; how the State has hitherto left them to find as they may a mean and narrow education; how

small under any circumstances would be their opportunities of culture; how (unlike the working classes) they are forced into an extreme isolation and an exaggerated self-reliance, by the intensity of the competition for fresh customers and new openings, and for wealth as a means of "rising in the world"—in which their lives are spent. All the education that political franchises and urban life afford cannot give full compensation for these drawbacks.

And the fact is that the enactments which alone have saved Parliamentary government from the appearance of failure, have not only had their origin in the great towns; they also have a common character. With scarcely an exception, they have dealt with questions that very closely touched either the interests or the sentiments of the urban middle class. Other important changes have no doubt been made by Parliament: but these have been invariably made under some pressing necessity or some accidental impulse. The Mutiny, for instance, brought about a reform in the government of India; the Crimean war a reform in the army; the accidental discovery of some cases of terrible neglect is now compelling a reform in a part of the Poor Law. Even the question of encouraging industry, thrift, and contentment in Ireland may now receive attention in the presence of a fresh outbreak of the old disorder. The Prussian victories have made further reforms in the army seem possible; and the desire to answer arguments for Reform, has caused many questions which were neglected before, to be declared pressing questions now. All these, however, were, or will be, the enactments of necessity, not the results of well-considered policy and foreseeing

statesmanship. All the Acts of the latter character—the reforms that have been first conceived, then popularized, and ultimately carried as partial applications of well-understood principles of government—are the work of the great towns; but then they have also for the most part involved changes either in our financial or in our commercial legislation, or otherwise in that part of the domain of politics which immediately affects the well-to-do inhabitants of towns. That the representatives of large towns would support all statesmanlike plans for furthering the general progress of the empire is not here denied. But it would be too sanguine to expect from the busy employers and the ill-educated middle class of the towns, that they will not only initiate such plans, but carry them through Parliament, so long as the county constituencies and the rural boroughs remain as they are at present.

The chief obstacle to progress is the *political* power of the Territorial Aristocracy. Their wealth and inherited influence, even apart from the nobler traditions that have descended on many of them, ought to place them above the narrow interests of a class, and make them the leaders of the nation. And this might be so, but for the irresponsible power given them by the present state of more than half the constituencies—a power which is fatal at once to popular sympathies and to statesmanship. Only the most generous natures, or the happiest circumstances are proof against its influence. And so long as it continues, Parliamentary government will not have shown what it is able to accomplish.

The great want of the country is a House of Commons that will give a fair field to statesmanship. A well-

administered despotism would have failed to do many admirable things we owe to our Parliamentary government. But no well-administered despotism would long tolerate the evils our Parliamentary government has overlooked. Yet a Parliamentary government is in theory the best of all governments; it is the just boast of its advocates that it can bring into co-operation for the furtherance of the progress of society all the intellectual gifts, the free energies, the generous aspirations, the administrative faculties, and the social forces of a nation. Our country, as well from its present circumstances as from its past history, is more than any other fitted for such a government. Here, at least, practice might approach the excellence of the theory.

It is not that men of statesmanlike mind are wanting in Parliament. It is not that in Parliament the subjects congenial to the feelings and views of the House of Commons, and in which the constituencies take a strong interest, are not dealt with in a statesmanlike manner. But the Minister of a Parliamentary government must breathe the spirit of the assembly in which he sits. The instincts of an orator control him; and an orator must be in sympathy with his hearers. Therefore, not of course without possessing a certain latitude, the mind of a Parliamentary statesman must conform to the mind of Parliament; the limits of his vision, and the range of his statesmanship, must, for practical purposes, be the same as those of Parliament. An English minister may lead the House of Commons wisely; he may achieve great things for his country; within the limits fixed by the public opinion of the House of Commons he may accomplish what before seemed impossible: but his course must

in the main be determined by that public opinion, and, before anything else, he must be the Minister of the House of Commons. It is this that makes the character of the House of Commons of such supreme importance. The House of Commons does not merely accept or reject the proposals of the Minister, it practically determines what the character of those proposals must be.

Industry, integrity, and capacity for business, are among the acknowledged characteristics of the House of Commons. The following would seem to be among the defects which unfit it to adopt on the most important questions a timely, comprehensive, and statesman-like policy:—an imperfect sense of the duty of social progress: an undue satisfaction with the present: an exaggerated concern for the maintenance of customs and institutions, which may be harmless or even good, but which cannot be essential to the national welfare: and the perversion to the service of a class, of those who ought to be the foremost supporters of a national policy.

And the character of the House of Commons is determined by the character of its constituencies. To the constituencies, therefore, we must chiefly look for an explanation of the shortcomings of the House of Commons.

I. The cause of its imperfect sense of the duty of progress is to be found in the fact that the middle class is predominant, while the working class is for practical purposes altogether excluded. The working class possesses, far more completely than any other class, that strong desire for a better future, without which social progress is a matter of chance and accident. It may almost be said that, though individuals in other conditions of life may

share it, no class can share it with them; because the life of all other classes is too busy or too prosperous, and the individual is too much isolated for the conception of social progress to be more than a passing thought of rare moments. But the working man, especially in large towns, is constantly reminded that he is one of a great multitude, whose prosperity or adversity he must share. The consciousness of mutual dependence makes the working class generous; while the sense of untrained powers and of undeveloped faculties gives them aspirations, which are not the least powerful of the social forces to be made available for the national service by a Parliamentary government.

For working men the need of social progress is a matter of every day's experience. They could not be largely represented in the House of Commons, without the statesmen in it feeling that a new force had arisen which would support them in difficult undertakings: that a demand had been created for exertions on their part in paths almost untrodden before. No Englishman should speak without respect of the middle class in the large towns, to whose co-operation during the last thirty-five years so much is owing. But in fact, as has been already urged, both they and their wealthier and better educated neighbours and leaders are too busy to make an effective demand for reforms that are necessary, but not specially necessary for themselves; or even to welcome them with alacrity. They have long known, for instance, that legislation would go far to make the Irish loyal and contented, but nothing short of some imminent peril could rouse them to insist that such legislation shall be no longer delayed.

II. Undue satisfaction with the present is another aspect of the imperfect sense of the duty of social progress. It is not unjust to the House of Commons to say that it shows little indication either of a resolution, that the condition of all classes of the people of England shall be far better thirty-five years hence than it is now; or of a consciousness that, if this hope be vain, a most dreary and degraded life is prepared for millions. Nor can it well be otherwise, so long as only the busy and prosperous, or the wealthy, or those who are struggling to be wealthy or prosperous, are represented in Parliament. The constituencies, in which such classes predominate, think, or act as if they were thinking, that misery and crime are the inevitable lot of the majority of our race; not because they are selfish, but because they do not give their minds to the matter at all.

III. One element of great importance in the character of the House of Commons is the nature of English conservatism. The natural conservatism of a country is the conservatism of its middle class. This class is conservative, because it combines moderate means with honesty of purpose, steadiness rather than activity of mind, and indifference to everything that is not obvious or immediate. It is slowly persuaded to alter anything that exists; it dislikes change because it is change; in those countries where it is happily powerful, it compels innovators to give good reasons for their innovations; coalescing first with one interest and then with another, it makes hasty innovations impossible; if a crisis or a social convulsion is apprehended, it stands conscious of its own strength and convinced of the truth of principles it has never doubted: and wise people, however

little they may have been in the habit of acting with it, know that it is a real safeguard of the public welfare. Such a class is very numerous and very powerful in our own country. It is powerful also in some other European countries. In the United States it was this class, consisting mainly of the farmers of the Free States, that freely sacrificed its wealth and its blood for the maintenance of the Union and of freedom, when both were assailed by the men who had resolved to found a military oligarchy on the basis of slavery.

But although England possesses this great conservative class, conservatism, as it appears in Parliament, is something different. It is not the middle class which appears by its representatives in Parliament: the middle class of the large towns is represented there; but the urban middle class has hitherto, at all events, supported the party of progress. But the *rural* middle class—the tenant-farmers and freeholders—take no part in politics. In most counties it would be untrue to say that they are not permitted to vote as they please. The truth rather is, that, dazzled and discouraged by the wealth and social eminence of the great proprietors who live among them, sometimes no doubt admiring their public spirit and grateful for acts of real generosity, but influenced always by an inevitable subserviency to a class whose power is so overshadowing—the freeholders of moderate estate, no less than the tenant-farmers, have long since ceased to be active members of the constituencies to which they nominally belong; and the real constituent body in the counties has come to be the limited class of great proprietors.

To this it must be added that the rural boroughs are

for the most part an appendage to the county constituencies, *i.e.* an addition to the representative power of the country gentlemen. The fatal defect of these boroughs, which wholly unfits them to return members to Parliament, is that they are without character. They have neither the activity of mind and the zeal for improvement which belong to urban constituencies; nor have they the sturdy faith and reverent loyalty to everything hallowed by custom and long association, which make an agricultural middle class wholesomely and powerfully conservative. With no convictions and no public opinion of their own, and with no means of forming any, the small colony of agricultural labourers, the few artisans isolated from the common life and common enterprises and common hopes of their order, the petty shopkeeper competing for the patronage of the neighbouring farmers, and the beerhouse keepers, who, with a few gentlefolk and professional men, constitute the population of such boroughs, are quite unable to keep the attention of their members fixed, as the attention of members of Parliament ought to be fixed, upon the great business of legislation and government. Who their members may be is a matter of accident. Good fortune has placed a few of the rural boroughs under the direction of a single intelligent and responsible will. For the rest, they fall to the first comer—the most industrious and seductive canvasser, the most unscrupulous plutocrat, or one of several influential neighbours. But the majority fall, as the counties for the most part fall, to the conservative majority of the class of large proprietors.

The consequence of the political bondage in which the counties are held and of the political apathy of the

rural boroughs is, that a very large body of landowners sit in the House of Commons, not primarily as the representatives of the conservative element of society, but secondarily only representing that element, and primarily representing what, relatively to the whole nation, is a very small social class. It would be contrary to the nature of men, if the members of a small class, owing great political power to the confidence, not of the general body of their countrymen, but of their class, did not look upon themselves as members of a privileged order. A conservative middle class and its representatives would be opposed to change; but then they would also be strong in the consciousness of a power firmly rooted in the national character and of an unassailable position. A privileged order may and generally does resist change, at least for a time; but it has all the weakness, the timidity, and the liability to groundless alarms, which are born of privilege. The representatives of a privileged order think most of their power. The representatives of genuine conservatives think most of the maintenance of the institutions to which they are attached.

The evil consequences of this anomaly are many. One or two, however, are conspicuous. It is a great misfortune for a nation that its rural middle class should be extruded from political life and deprived of its educating influences. It is an obstacle to the efficiency as well as to the honour of Parliamentary government that for the conservative element in the State there should be substituted a political faction, which, according to the nature of political factions, is for ever wantonly obstructing legislation and causing perilous delays, and sacrificing its principles to the maintenance or the acqui-

sition of power. But the injury to the State is most clearly seen, when it is remembered that the class of men who are turned into a faction through the political selfishness engendered by their anomalous control over half the constituencies of the Empire, ought, by virtue of their birth, their opportunities of culture, and their leisure, to be the leaders and the foremost servants of the nation.

A yet more pernicious consequence of the system which substitutes a privileged order for the natural conservatism of the country, is that everything that seems to be connected, however remotely, with their privileges, gains in their eyes a factitious importance. With a privileged order, every question that may possibly affect their privilege is a "dangerous" question. The privilege itself takes a place in their minds to which everything else is subordinated. It becomes either the Constitution or the main bulwark of the Constitution. Thus, in the eyes of the territorial class, every attempt to change the character of the county constituencies is an attempt at revolution; the rural boroughs, because they are a principal support of privilege, are essential to the efficiency of Parliament; nay, they are the single characteristic of our Government, which distinguishes it for good from all others. The principle of a State Church, not only in this country, where it has a strong hold on the affection of large classes, but in Ireland, where it is a mark of conquest—and the state of the law which encourages primogeniture and permits the settlement of land—are not only good in themselves; because they contribute to the maintenance of the artificial system of political privilege, they are guarded with extravagant solicitude, while the con-

dition of Ireland and the education of the people are practically forgotten.

IV. But the direct and irresponsible power of the Territorial Aristocracy is the cause of the fourth characteristic defect of the House of Commons—viz. the identification of the wealthiest class of the community with the opponents of progress.

If it is to the working classes we must look for the motive power necessary for progress, it is to the possessors of hereditary wealth, more than to any others, that we have a right to look for the guidance of our country to a happier future. So long as wealth and social prestige descend from father to son, those on whom they descend will have great social power. It is the part of such men in a free community to bring to bear on legislation and government all the enlightenment that leisure, and all the dispassionateness that an assured position, can give—and, lifted far above the passions of a class, to be the supporters of a policy really national.

The story of the failure of the Territorial Aristocracy to take advantage of its splendid opportunity, has been told so often, in such bitter words, and with such an appearance of class prejudice, that there is some danger of its being forgotten how true it is. Every[1] great legisla-

[1] There is one very famous exception. The Factories' Act has been, to that great majority of the Territorial Aristocracy which has usurped the name and misused the power of "Conservatives," what his single speech was to William Gerard Hamilton. It is needless to say, that the measures cannot be characterised as exceptions, which, in this session and in other sessions during which they have been in office, the "Conservative" party have introduced; after they had consistently obstructed the same measures, while in opposition, either by open hostility, or by the captious criticism of determined ill-wishers. The Roman Catholic Relief Bill and the Repeal of the Corn Law were each carried under the pressure of a great crisis, by "Conservative" statesmen;

tive change, of which we are now enjoying the results, has either been opposed by the great majority of the possessors of hereditary wealth, or has been carried without help from them, or any sign of their sympathy. But they should be judged not only by what has been done without their aid, or in spite of their opposition; they are mainly responsible for what has been left undone. For good, at all events, the power in France of Napoleon III. has not been greater than theirs in England. No scheme of beneficent legislation that they might have devised would have failed to obtain the willing support of the great urban constituencies. Their power and their leisure had laid upon them great responsibilities. It was out of their class that statesmen should have arisen; it was for them to form and support a vigorous and far-sighted public opinion. It was for them to grapple with the questions which the overworked and untrained minds of the dwellers in towns might well overlook. But they have passed them by, scarcely recognising their existence, except in order to oppose some suggested expedient, or denounce as full of innumerable perils, the first approach of generous legislation or comprehensive Reform. Divided between an exaggerated admiration for that part of the Parliamentary system on which the power of their class depends, and the most groundless fears for the safety of property and the preservation of order, the men whose birth and circumstances had made them the natural leaders of the people, have hitherto crowded the benches on one side of

but by "Conservative" statesmen acting alone against the opposition, and amidst the most dismal forebodings, of their followers. Sir Robert Peel, it is true, had previously initiated our commercial legislation. But Sir Robert Peel drew his inspiration from his descent, not from his political connexion.

Parliament, hardly contributing anything to the advancement of any national interest, to the solution of any social question, or to the fair fame of Parliamentary government.

The causes of this are not far to seek. To the removal of one cause it is to be hoped that a reformed Parliament will soon contribute all the aid that legislation can give. The education that is given by a life spent among fellow-citizens in a great city is good; but it falls short of the higher education which is within the reach of men of hereditary wealth. But Parliament has permitted the higher education to be trifled with in the places where men profess to seek it. The colleges at our old Universities are, for the most part, little more than pleasant clubs, where a few years are idly spent. No adequate provision is made for teachers; and the training of the youth of England is left to the generosity of public-spirited students, or to the care of men who have purposes in life not often consistent with their being good educators. The choice of systems of education is left to custom, which the Universities are so constituted that they cannot adequately direct; while the authority of their names forbids the trial of any system but their own. From schools, where years are spent in a mode of training useless for all but a few, and from colleges which fall far short of what they might be, the majority of the possessors of hereditary wealth pass, by the will of their order, into the national Parliament; and there surround the path of statesmen with distrust and difficulty, avoiding, as insoluble or dangerous, the questions that stand most in need of wise legislation, and leaving the honour of such wise legislation as is accomplished to men who

have learnt a higher, yet not the highest, wisdom in the great school of urban life.

But the best education schools and colleges can give is insufficient to make a good member of Parliament. The most highly educated man is not competent to judge of matters to which his mind is not attentively directed; and, on the other hand, nature gives most men a rough good-sense, which, if it be assisted by a very little training, will lead them to right conclusions on subjects to which they apply themselves. It is therefore to public life that we must principally look for the education of statesmen. And, above all, we must look to the constituencies. If nature or education has given a man open-mindedness, the constituencies must give him practical aims. It is for them to state the political problem, and to insist that it shall receive attention. It is for the Representative to solve it.

The rural boroughs can neither give such instruction, nor can they exact responsibility. The counties offer political *education* to any one who wishes to find it; but the *responsibility* of a county member is due only to a class. Anything that tends to restore political life to the county constituencies, contributes to their educating power, and therefore to the increase of statesmen. With the rural boroughs would pass away the chief source of political indifference, and with political indifference one great obstacle to the efficiency of Parliament.

The cause of nearly all the shortcomings of our Representative System is the want of responsibility. The circumstances in which the lives of members of Parliament are spent are such as they may well think no change can improve; and they are naturally reluctant

to alter anything in a world that for them seems so nearly perfect. Hence the vital importance of bringing them face to face with large constituencies, and making them familiar with the wants and wishes of the poor. Hitherto the time of Parliament has been unduly occupied with details; while great evils have been allowed to gather strength, till the difficulty of dealing with them has become almost insuperable. The skirts only of Irish and Educational questions are touched, from a fear lest the one may lead to the discussion of the Land-laws, or of the State Church; and the discussion of the other to an increase of the power of the State. A Parliament whose industry responsibility had quickened into statesmanship, would long ago have dealt effectually and fearlessly with the want of education and with the misery of Ireland: convinced that if the English Land-laws and the existence in England of a State Church are good, the adoption of a just policy towards Ireland will not make them less good. Robbed, by their uncontrolled predominance in counties and rural boroughs, of the wholesome guidance of a sense of responsibility, a majority of the members of the House of Commons have acted for years under a sense of perpetual anxiety, not for great and national, but for comparatively small and almost personal interests; with this result: that Ireland has come again to the verge of anarchy; and, with the growth of our great towns, ignorance has become an immense peril; while the discussions, that were averted at such a cost, are only postponed.

The most powerful argument in favour of the reduction of the franchise in counties and in large towns, and of the transfer of seats to large towns or populous and

busy counties from rural boroughs, is to be found in the effect of those changes on members of Parliament. The men who sit in the House of Commons will be nearly the same men, but their knowledge will be greater, and their policy more statesman-like. Political life will no longer consist in sitting irresponsibly for counties in which political life is suspended, or for boroughs from which it has passed away; but in helping forward the work of English statesmen. There will be not less culture in Parliament, and not less reverence for what is worthy of reverence. But the mind of a member of Parliament will be more open; he will have more knowledge, and far more wisdom. He will have learnt that, if a man can find out what is the interest of the Nation, he will have studied at the same time his own interest and that of his order; while the opposite process leads only to disastrous blunders and irreparable waste of power. Half the life of England will no longer be a sealed book to him. He will be less dazzled by the mere increase of national wealth; less distrustful of "world bettering;" less satisfied that things shall remain as they are. He will have come to know something of the wants and the difficulties, and also of the worth, of the great industrial majority of the English nation; of the longing of those among them who are educated, that the vice and misery which ignorance produces among their neighbours and around their homes shall cease. Such changes will not only give England more statesmen, but—what is of equal importance—more men able to appreciate statesmanship.

Life has hitherto been, for the great majority of men, a life of squalor and gloom; or of toil unrelieved, at the

best, by more than one or two of the very many things that give charm to the lives of a few of us. To the complacent, or indolent, or selfish school of politicians, who bid us let society alone, and insist that the individual is master of his destiny, it is a sufficient answer to point on the one hand to the immense and abiding misery that mistaken legislation and bad governments have brought upon the world; and, on the other hand, to the great benefits that wise legislation has in our time spread among the people. Millions of every class, but especially among the poor, do in fact begin, and often complete, their lives under a weight of inherited vices and social difficulties, for the existence of which society is responsible, and for the mitigation of which all that can be done by legislation should be done as speedily as possible. The power of society to alter the conditions under which the lives of individuals are spent has been but recently recognised: the hope of what may be achieved has but lately dawned; the effort to accomplish it has scarcely yet commenced. Until the discovery began of the processes by which wealth is increased without any increase of human labour, it might have seemed in vain to hope for any material alleviation of the general lot of man. But those discoveries have now placed legislators under a new responsibility, because they have established a surer ground of hope for the future of society. For two or three generations the recognition of the duty of social progress, and of the possibility of furthering it by legislation, has been the basis of politics. And the test of a good constituency is that it can impress this lesson upon its representatives.

To those who say that Parliament, as at present constituted, is worthy of trust in this matter, there are two answers. First, considering its opportunities, Parliament has, in fact, done little; and with the most pressing of all questions it has trifled. Secondly, what has been done, has been done, so to speak, by subalterns—by the men on whom the chief burden of legislation should not have fallen. If any one thinks that much has been accomplished, let him consider how much more might have been accomplished, if the persistent opposition of the most powerful class in the community had been changed for intelligent help. If political activity can be restored to the counties, and the incumbrance of the rural boroughs removed from the constituent body, much will have been done towards the accomplishment of this change. Parliamentary Government will, then, for the first time in the history of any nation, receive a fair trial.

In the seventeenth century it required all the energy of Representative Institutions, then less perfectly developed than now, but much more completely national, to subdue the power of the Crown. In the eighteenth, Parliament, while still representative in form, had become little more than the instrument of an oligarchy or of the Crown. The change that was accomplished in 1832 enfranchised the middle classes; and has led the way to all the reforms which have placed on a firm basis the material prosperity of England. The purpose of the changes now at hand is to make our government national; and with a national government it may be hoped the blots will disappear that now disgrace our policy;—that the Irishman will develop

in Ireland the virtues he now shows everywhere but at home, that education will spread rapidly among the people, and that every year a larger measure of comfort and enlightenment will reach the homes of the poor. But whether these results are attained swiftly or slowly must still largely depend on the part that is taken by the Territorial Aristocracy.

XII.

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS IN 1833.

BY SIR GEORGE YOUNG.

Most of us have heard some political veteran of the times of the Reform Bill dilating upon the subsequent perils of the country, and the extraordinary combination of circumstances that averted its ruin. "At that time," he will say, "party spirit ran higher than at present; politics occupied more of our thoughts and conversation; the destiny of the country hung upon the turning of a feather; statesmen lost their heads, and parties their principles; the Revolution was upon us, and it was by no merit of our rulers that we were saved from the calamities of anarchy. But what followed was a surprise to us, and a still greater surprise to the revolutionary party. In the House of Commons which met in 1833, the constitutional element was virtually annihilated. The Church, the Lords, the very fabric of property was threatened. In the ranks of the majority the most violent and the most ignorant seemed to rule. But the good sense of the country re-asserted itself; the Whig leaders betrayed their Radical following; the intrepidity

of the Conservative remnant opposed a constant barrier to the tide; the fanaticism of the Irish Catholics aroused the spirit of Englishmen, and the force of the movement spent itself in clouds of turbid oratory. Before long the Government, unable to keep pace with its popular supporters, was reduced to rely on the forbearance of the Opposition. Disunion eventually overthrew it; and the reaction obtained a brief triumph in three years, and a permanent superiority in only eight, measured from the day when we almost despaired of the republic. Notwithstanding the subsequent break-up of the Protectionist Ministry, the progress of revolution had been effectually arrested; and the Reform Bill era became matter of history, to serve as a warning indeed to the next generation, but not yet to involve, at least by its immediate consequences, the total ruin of our social and political system."[1]

It is not surprising that a hasty judgment, founded partly on the records of debates, and partly on the smart things that were said and sung of them, should make a byword of the first reformed Parliament for confusion, verbosity, and emptiness. It was, however, in truth an epoch of fivefold importance in Parliamentary history. To it belongs, in commerce, the opening of Oriental trade; in social polity, the new Poor Law and the first Factory Act; in ecclesiastical matters, the rescue of the Irish Church, by the hand of the State, from ruin, and the consequent re-assertion of the principle, which time had obscured, that the temporalities of a State Church are under the control of the State. In Law there was the abolition of several systems of intolerable formulæ,

[1] See especially Alison's History of Europe, New Series, ch. xxxi.

which encumbered the transfer of landed property and the procedure of the superior courts. Lastly, there was the first initiation of the Legislature into the work of National Education. With all these, the House of Commons found time to abolish slavery in the West Indies, and to subdue Ireland with a Coercion Bill; to give the Bank a new Charter and the metropolis a new criminal court; and to discuss, sometimes abortively, sometimes with advantage, all the various crotchets (then so deemed) of the new Radical members, including Free Trade, Civil disabilities, Bribery prevention, Municipal Corporation Reform, Criminal Law Reform, University Reform, Church Rate abolition, Tithe abolition, Triennial Parliaments, and the Ballot. There is hardly a question which has exercised the wisdom of legislators and the talents of debaters since, of which the history does not begin from, or in some degree turn upon, its treatment by that astonishing Parliament.

Nor was the impetus to legislative action arrested immediately by the dissolution. The Ministry of Sir Robert Peel left one important legacy to the country in the project for an Ecclesiastical Commission. In the succeeding years the great measure of Municipal Reform was carried, triumphantly in Scotland, decisively in England, tardily and with much compromise for Ireland. The restored Ministers profited by the designs of their predecessors to pass a Tithe Commutation Act, and to relieve Dissenters from some of the more scandalous of the disabilities under which they laboured. The work of Law Reform made some progress; some of the beneficial provisions of the preceding sessions were extended in operation, and the foul stains of blood were

removed from our penal code. The honourable history of the Whig Ministry was concluded by two reforms of widely differing import, but alike remarkable for their boldness, and for a certain far-sighted sagacity which time has since justified. Canada, by the union of its two provinces under a system of complete self-government, was restored to order and loyalty; and, at the cost of an alarming sacrifice of revenue, a cheap postage, with all its attendant benefits, was purchased for the poor.

This brief enumeration of salutary reforms may be an old tale, but it should never be a wearisome one to Englishmen. Though it be impossible to claim for all these measures the praise due to a complete and satisfactory enactment, yet it may at least be said of them that they were the work not so much of a class, or of a legislature, as of the nation; and that he who refuses honour to their general wisdom, or assent to the principles on which they were founded, cuts himself off less from the triumphs of a political party than from the history of his country.

We cannot, however, regard the years which followed the Reform Bill as a complete era of successful innovation, with a prelude, a climax, and a decline. On the contrary, the high-water mark of innovating energy must be placed at the passing of the Reform Bill itself. It needed but three years from that time to bring the champions of Reform to the avowal that the success of one or two measures was all that could be hoped for in a session, and that even this might be seriously endangered by the attempt to accomplish more. A time of compromise and almost of indifference succeeded; and

a state of equal balance between parties, a condition of things unfavourable to legislative energy, has lasted with little variation to the present time. Success has alternated between rival leaders; in some departments changes have been effected, and in others successfully resisted. But on the whole we may accept the statement of our respected monitor, that the "Revolution" was arrested in its progress. We must add, however, that the history of the Reformed Parliament of itself proves the essential limitation of a movement such as then resulted in creating it; and that the prophets, who foretold an accelerated precipitation down a slope ending in some terrible abyss of anarchy, were as unreasonable in their expectations as the event has shown them to be wrong. The supposed popular madness, which is often quoted for the terror and instruction of ourselves, is seen to have been, not the threatening prelude of a revolution, but the expression of angry impatience by a people, sensible of suffering, and without sufficient means of political articulation, who had set their hearts on the attainment of a definite object, and were ready to sit down, somewhat too contentedly, when they had attained it.

If, then, we cannot accept the theory of a fever and a reaction, of a people's madness created by agitators, and arrested by the interposition of some Genius of "good sense," how are we to characterise the historical result? It seems to be assumed somewhat hastily by the defenders of one Reform Bill, and no more, that the work of those years left little in legislation that was conspicuous or splendid to be done. It is said that abuses had accumulated, while men waited for a Reform Bill;

the new Parliament swept them away boldly, and, if succeeding Parliaments had not the same glory, the fault was in the nature of things. The abuses which remained were of course the most difficult of removal: dead wood in the structure cannot be pruned or lopped away like the excrescences which come first under the knife. Discontent with the slow process of Reform in the second stage is an "ignorant impatience." Besides, the first Reformers had the glory of passing measures which had been matured through long contest and frequent defeat; their successors had not the same felicity.

This is true, but not the whole truth. The list above given includes the removal of some abuses, some few constructions of administrative organizations, and some commencements, chiefly valuable for the principles they declared. Other examples might be given under each of these heads. But though what remained for removal might need time to remove, there is no excuse for a failure to continue what had been commenced, or for neglect to emulate what had been accomplished. The complaint is not unreasonable, when we compare age with age, and commencement with sequel, that the House of Commons has been slow to remove abuses that were indefensible, and has shown a growing disinclination to deal with legislation in the mass. The boast of laborious industry by individual members is unavailing, if their common tasks are not effectively performed; and the freedom with which all opinions may be mooted and all questions sifted on the floor, is small matter for satisfaction, if the means are deficient of arriving at and enforcing a conclusion. Above all things, however tardy its movements, the House of Commons might long have

retained the confidence of the nation, if it had not practically begun to lose confidence in itself. One or two examples of this irresolution will suffice.

Compared with the former enthusiasm, it is amazing to see how little interest the House of Commons takes in Education. In the last generation there was a belief expressed by societies and cheap publications innumerable, that the time had come for effecting, by the diffusion and improvement of knowledge, a general improvement in the condition of the poor. The societies survive, and the cheap literature holds its ground; but the House and its constituency have not buckled to the work. A temporary expedient of annual grants, never intended by its inventors to become a permanent system, has been patched into something that "will hold water;" that is, will not break down from its extravagance of expenditure; but this machinery will never cope with ignorance and paganism. The experience of thirty years, with all their Commissions and debates, has left us vacillating without system or purpose. Between State supervision and voluntary effort the House has adopted a compromise which, like compromises generally, does not fit the necessity. The religious bodies, Church and Chapel alike, have done a good deal; the State has done something; but the result of their united efforts is inadequate to the wants of the nation. Meanwhile, in the place of a belief in education, and a corresponding determination to make it universal, the cause is hindered by an indolent resignation to the economical necessity of ignorance.

That the children of agricultural labourers must begin work at ten years old; that men cannot be made virtuous by Act of Parliament; that no learning is useful unless

seasoned with divinity; that State aid cannot be given without creating a vested interest; that the central power is an alien enemy, to be thwarted and opposed: these are the fallacies accepted or tolerated, when the mind of the nation is directed, through its present representatives, to the greatest labour of the time. They are always ready to discuss the discipline of the Education Office, the dignity of the Inspectors, the trivialities of examination papers; men of all opinions unite to deprecate expenditure; but the civilizing organization has been neglected or deferred. Can we pride ourselves on the paltry seven or eight millions that have been spent, and the annual thousands that are being spent, as the outcome of thirty years' discussion? Has not a generation grown up since 1834, destitute of the soberness of thought and breadth of view which might have been imparted by culture? We hear daily of the incompetence for politics, of the vanity and narrowness of those who lead the working class; but what if leaders and followers had had the means of self-improvement which a civilized and Christian country should have placed within their reach? It was well said by Mr. Carlyle in 1843: "Supposing the Corn Laws abolished, and from ten to twenty years of new possibility to live and find wages conceded us in consequence; if the whole English people during these twenty years of respite be not educated with at least schoolmaster's educating, a tremendous responsibility will rest somewhere!" Now that this responsibility meets us in the grave question of granting or refusing representation to the people, is the House of Commons clear of blame, which owes to its own neglect its best pretext for refusal?

If we take another great question on the list, that of the Municipal Reform Acts, we shall again find zeal and sagacity in the outset, inefficiency and timidity in the sequel. To the popular municipal bodies thus created, we owe nearly all the political training of the shop-keeping class which has for one generation governed England. That Parliamentary elections do express in a rough way the good sense and intelligence of the classes who elect, and that one important lesson has sunk deeply into their minds—the lesson of political compromise—is due mainly to these schools of local self-government which the Reformed Parliament created. But where has been the central power that should have urged torpid municipalities into activity and emulation? How has the House of Commons dealt with the metropolis, then reserved for separate treatment, but which in fact has never been municipally organized at all? Without pattern, where they should have found one, in the metropolis; without efficient impulse or guidance from the administrative centre; without the public spirit fostered by a government of all for the good of all, and with all the timidity natural to the small commercial class dominant in them, the municipal bodies of the provincial towns—notwithstanding the great benefits their institution has conferred on the nation—have often fallen short of the duties required of them, and have failed to attract so much as they ought to have attracted, of the local talent available for administration.

Again, in the various complicated questions included under the title of Law Reform, we notice this at the outset: the work of the first Reformed Parliament was necessarily destructive. The method adopted, perhaps the best

possible under the circumstances, was to group as many abuses as might be, in a single measure of abolition, and to substitute a simpler expedient, where necessary, for effecting the legitimate purpose of the Acts repealed. The reforms were mostly of procedure; some few only of substantive law. The additions thus made to jurisprudence are, in the most English of senses, practical. But since Law is a science, as well as an instrument for conducing to the business of life, these practical expedients have not fitted well into the structure. They have in many cases added to its complexity, and in all to its bulk. The first element of a science, an accurate definition of its terms, is still absent or deficient in modern English law. Legal phraseology is therefore still hopelessly at variance with the language of the people. But a popular representative body can never properly reform, it can only make incongruous additions to its legislation, when those who enact and those who have to obey the law are alike ignorant of the language of the law. Hence the bulk of our jurisprudence is becoming portentous; it is fast overwhelming its professors: it has long outstripped the comprehension of its creators.

Cheap justice, the most conspicuous of the numerous ways in which people may be made happy and virtuous by Act of Parliament, was the avowed object of these legal reforms. Yet even so, it took till 1845 to establish so necessary—and let us say, so mild—a palliative for the costliness of litigation as the County Courts; and the County Courts existed for twenty years without jurisdiction in equity, to the scandal of justice, and to the detriment of the poor. When capital punishment was finally abolished for offences against property, the prin-

ciple was established that penalties for crime should be measured by the public conscience, not by the opinion legislators might form of what was most likely to deter. The establishment of this principle cleared the way for the formation of a Criminal Code; for the public conscience constantly tends to the consistent enforcement of a logical system, that of scientific morals; while scattered edicts of repression are only defensible when viewed separately. Yet the Acts for the consolidation of the Statute criminal law, imperfect even as a digest, by reason of the whole body of Common Law maxims which are still retained, were only passed in 1861; having actually been long prejudiced and delayed by the unsuspected and unheeded anomalies which they revealed.

One grand purpose of all Law Reform is to enable the people, without more special training than may be given to every citizen, to understand the law under which they live, and under which their business is transacted. Liberals believe that it is both possible and expedient to do so. Our representatives at all events must know the laws that exist, or at least must be able to understand them when they are read, if they are to do justice to their task. The steps necessary for this purpose are, first, to digest, secondly, to simplify, the existing law; without ceasing to remove abuses when they gall, or to provide new regulations as they are required by the developments of business. The third and crowning work will be to systematize the whole, by alteration, where alteration is necessary, as well as by arrangement. The House of Commons has made but a few tentative experiments in the first department; it exhibits no power to begin the second, no wish to grapple with the third.

The mere unreasoning prejudice against innovation no longer has so much influence, or is so openly appealed to, as formerly. But there are other forms, perhaps equally effective, in which indolence and timidity may combine with selfishness in resisting beneficial change. Such is eminently the so-called English aversion to things perfect, or which seem perfect, on paper. Because a plausible theory is more common than a true one, people talk as if "theory" was something pernicious and opposed to practice; and such loose talk is not without bad influence on legislation. It certainly contributes to that disinclination to deal with masses of law at once which we have placed among our subjects of complaint. Another evil is the instinctive attitude of opposition which is assumed as a matter of course by the members of one party, on the first mention of a proposal supported by the other. Too great indulgence in the stimulants of party government has made in turn most of our domestic, and some imperial questions, the battle-field of Ministries. And many matters are reluctantly entertained by the House of Commons, solely from the way in which individuals have fettered themselves by pledges and Governments by programmes. Another consists in the jealousy of delegating to fitter hands the subjects most interesting to the members of the House. This jealousy it is which overwhelms the machinery of Parliament with administrative detail concerning the transactions of landowners and public companies. Another weakness of the House of Commons, which is aggravated by the unnecessary burdens it imposes on itself, is its disinclination to undertake legislative work proper for the public service, especially for the benefit of the unrepresented classes,

under cover of the sufficiency of economical laws; while these, perhaps, are neutralized or qualified in operation by the special circumstances of the case. Lastly, there is a tendency to inaction, proceeding from a latent disbelief in the progress of nations; and the notion of something cyclic or oscillatory in events, which may hereafter give resistance to change a retrospective justification, when the theory which has been disposed of shall turn out to be true, and when the epoch which has departed shall recur.

It may be said of the House of Commons, not merely that in this or that matter it has not acted; we must add, that in some matters it seems uncertain how to act, and uncertain how to relieve itself of uncertainty. This reproach is not peculiar to a party or a session: Parliaments meet and are dissolved, but the new one is soon hampered by the traditions of the old; Commissions and Committees sit, but often with little zeal in the investigation, and little readiness to act upon such results as may be obtained.

If, then, we find one Parliamentary epoch, the results of which can be regarded with satisfaction, succeeded by a gradual relapse—not, indeed, into the state of things, but into the rate of progress, which was found inadequate before—it may follow that a repetition of the same process is desirable. A measure of further enfranchisement, considered merely with reference to legislation, promises to give fresh vigour to the minds and energies of statesmen: it would bring some fresh sympathies into Parliament, some new notions into the Committee rooms; some idlers might vanish from the lobbies, and some prejudice from the debates. After much declamation against the

mischievous effects of the change, and a good many metaphors drawn from the inclined plane, it would be discovered that a reaction had set in; and no doubt the Conservative party would soon rally round the Constitution. In process of time, the Reform Bill of 186— would become, like its prototype, a monument of the vanity of agitators and the good sense of the community. We should then have the satisfaction of counting the valuable measures which had slipped through somehow, in the intervals of anarchy: we should find new matter of congratulation in the achievements of the past. If energy like that of the first Reformed Parliament were all that we could hope for as the result of passing another, it might be worth while to pass it.

This is our answer to the limited vision which sees nothing but the mischiefs of organic change. False analogies with European revolution have led some to speak of constitutional reform in language fitted rather to a *pronunciamento* or a *coup d'état*. This English movement has nothing in common with revolution. The one is a healthful legislative stimulus; the other an intermittent fever. It may formerly have been believed that any lowering of the suffrage would tend with fresh impetus towards further change; that all useful business would begin to give place to agitation, and all fixity of institutions would be lost for ever. If history ever taught mankind a lesson, the sequel of 1832 has shown the vanity of these terrors. That movement was strictly limited in scope to the expression of prevailing national convictions. If the movement of the present day be not wholly dissimilar, its results will also be bounded by the prevalent convictions of the nation. We recognise

and admit no such dissimilarity. To us the unity of the nation and of the national history seems in this point clear and indisputable. The same motives which then urged the enfranchisement of some, now urge the enfranchisement of others; the same historical tendency towards freedom which then carried a Reform Bill, will sooner or later carry another; and the same sagacity which has guided the fortunes of England, in the hands of all her children who have been called hitherto to her counsels, will not cease to guide them still in the increased multitude of her counsellors.

APPENDIX.

ANALYTICAL TABLE OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

UNITED KINGDOM.

	Number of Boroughs.	Total Population.	Number of Members.	
Boroughs, &c. with population under twenty thousand each	145	—	215	
Above twenty thousand .	109	—	181	
Counties, &c. under one hundred and fifty thousand	100	—	168	
Counties, &c. over one hundred and fifty thousand	44	—	88	
Total	254 144	— —	396 256	Borough Members. County Members.
University Members . .	—	—	6	
Boroughs with population under five thousand . .	11	43,705	17	Liberals . . 8 Conservatives 9
Boroughs with over two hundred thousand . .	9	3,326,039	18	Liberals . . 15 Conservatives 3
Boroughs with less than ten thousand	10	70,020	20	Liberals . . 9 Conservatives 11
Boroughs with more than one hundred thousand .	10	1,351,009	21	Liberals . . 20 Conservatives 1

ANALYTICAL TABLE, *continued*—

UNITED KINGDOM, *continued*—

	Number of Boroughs.	Total Population.	Number of Members.	
Boroughs less than ten thousand	16	107,481	32.	Liberals . . 14 Conservatives 18
Boroughs with more than fifty thousand	16	1,180,304	31	Liberals . . 21 Conservatives 10
Boroughs with less than ten thousand population	37	221,206	69	Liberals . . 31 Conservatives 38 Majority C. 7
Boroughs with population over fifty thousand, under seven hundred thousand *	35	5,857,352	70	Liberals . . 56 Conservatives 14 Majority L. 42

REPRESENTATION OF PROPERTY.

	Number of Boroughs.	Payment to Income Tax in 1865.	Members.
		£	
Total Counties, United Kingdom †	—	4,475,474	256
Total Boroughs, United Kingdom	—	5,615,817	396
Boroughs with less than ten thousand	67	2,071,341	106
Boroughs with more than two hundred thousand	9	24,376,627	18
Boroughs with less than twenty thousand	145	367,323	215
Boroughs with over twenty thousand	109	5,248,894	181

* Thus a population of 221,206 returns 69 Members with a majority of 7 Conservatives, every seat but one or two being under landed influence. On the other hand, 35 boroughs with a population of 5,857,352, only return 70 Members, with a majority of 42 Liberals.

† The wealth of the Counties is greatly increased by the addition of the urban districts which Mr. Disraeli would include within the borough boundaries.

ANALYTICAL TABLE, *continued*—

ARISTOCRATIC ELEMENT IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.*

Conservatives	175		
Liberals	151		
Total Aristocratic	326		
Analysis :—			
Baronets	71		
Elder Sons of Baronets	11		
Younger Sons of Baronets	19		
Grandsons of Baronets	8		
Baronetage . . . Total		—	109
Elder Sons of Peers	37		
Younger Sons of Peers	64		
Grandsons of Peers	15		
Peerage . . . Total		—	116
Commoners connected by Marriage or Descent		100	
Aristocratic . . . Total		—	326
Another view :—			
Alliances			
(1) Between Baronet and Baronet	23		
(2) Between Baronet and Peer	53		
(3) Between Peer and Peer	79		
Alliances . . . Total		—	155
Another view :—			
Members representing One Peerage by Marriage or Descent	117		
Members representing Two Peerages by Marriage or Descent	67		
Members representing Three Peerages by Marriage or Descent	18		
Army and Navy	271		
Officers exclusive of Guardsmen		54	
Guardsmen		58	
Militia		48	
Yeomanry		56	
Volunteers		44	
Naval		11	

* This table is compiled exclusively from Dod's "New Parliament;" it does not include those squires and owners of landed property whose connexion with the Peerage does not appear there.

ANALYTICAL TABLE, *continued*—

UNIVERSITIES, SCHOOLS, PROFESSIONS, BUSINESS, ETC.

Public Schools and Universities :—		
Oxford	136	
Christchurch		76
Balliol		9
&c.		&c.
Cambridge	110	
Trinity		88
St. John's		12
&c.		&c.
London University	7	
Dublin	27	
Edinburgh	9	
Glasgow	3	
Public Schools :—		
Eton	105	
Harrow	52	
Rugby	23	
Westminster	17	
Winchester	9	
Charterhouse	7	
Shrewsbury	5	
Sandhurst	5	
Woolwich	4	
Honour Men	45	
First Class Men	19	
Double Firsts	3	
Double Seconds	8	
Other Classes	4	
Passmen	the rest.	
Authors	78	
Lawyers	100	
Queen's Councillors		24
Magistrates	175	
Deputy Lieutenants	235	
High Sheriffs	28	
Railway Directors	179	
Insurance Office Directors	53	
Bankers	78	
Brewers	12	
Dissenters	84	

ANALYTICAL TABLE, *continued*—

CLUBS, TRADE, DISSENT.

Clubs :—

Conservative Clubs	249
Liberal Clubs	221
Travellers'	88
University Clubs	82
Athenæum	48
Army and Navy Clubs	52
Guards'	19
Boodle's	45
White's	42

Trade :—

Ship Owners	7
East India Merchants	4
Iron Masters	10
Cotton Merchants and Calico Printers	7
Worsted and Carpet Manufacturers	5
Silk Manufacturers	2
Miscellaneous	87
Total	122

Dissent :*—

Independents	13	
Baptists	1	
Wesleyan	1	
Unitarians	12	
English Presbyterians	1	
United Presbyterians	3	
Free Churchmen	2	(Supposed)
Quakers	4	
Jews	5	
English Roman Catholics	2	
Irish Roman Catholics	40	(Supposed)
General Total	84	

* We owe this table to the favour of Mr. Carvell Williams.

TABLE OF LIBERAL AND CONSERVATIVE MEMBERS.*

	Liberal Members.		Conservative Members.	
English Boroughs	197		123	
Welsh Boroughs	12		2	
Scotch Burghs	23		0	
Irish Boroughs	25		14	
Total Boroughs, U. K. . . .		257		139
English Counties	50		97	
Welsh Counties	7		8	
Scotch Counties	19		11	
Irish Counties	31		33	
Total Counties		107		149
University Members . . .	0			6
General Total, U. K. :—				
Liberal Members		364		294
Conservative Members . .		294		
Liberal Majority		70		

ABSTRACT

Of the Distribution of the Working Classes throughout the Constituencies of England and Wales.

Total Electors on Register .	514026	
Total Working Classes on Register	128603	
General Average of Working Men Electors to other Electors	26·3	
38 Boroughs † returning 73 Members absorb . . .	89282	Working Men Electors.
The remaining 162 English and Welsh Boroughs have	39321	Working Men Electors left, or say 230 a piece.

* The object of this table is not to show how many Liberals or how many Conservatives are in Parliament, but, taking any Parliament elected under the Reform Bill of 1832, to show how the different constituencies have a tendency to vote.

† In only 8 of these 38 Boroughs have the Working Men an actual majority. A complete list of these 8 Boroughs is given on page 332.

TABLE

Showing the Members returned by 32 *Boroughs, which absorb* 82,948 *out of the* Total Working Men on Register, viz. 128,603.

	Electors.	Per centage to total Electors.	Members returned at last General Election.
Metropolitan Districts:			
Finsbury	25491	16·4	Torrens, Lusk.
Lambeth	27754	34·2	Hughes, Doulton.
London	17534	8·9	Goschen, Crawford, Laurence, Rothschild.
Marylebone . . .	23888	21·6	Lewis, Chambers.
Southwark	11646	47·4	Laird, Locke.
Tower Hamlets . .	34115	23·8	Ayrton, Butler.
Westminster . . .	12817	11·9	Grosvenor, Mill.
* Greenwich	9813	52·7	Salomons, Bright (Sir C.)
Average . .	...	27·0	
Fifteen Seaport Towns:			
Bristol	14324	35·8	Berkeley, Peto.
Liverpool	21839	13·0	Horsfall, Graves.
Southampton . . .	4230	49·7	Gurney, Moffatt.
Birkenhead	4563	45·3	Laird.
Brighton	6352	33·1	White, Fawcett.
Devonport	2860	49·5	Flemming, Ferrand.
Portsmouth . . .	4671	27·1	Stone, Gaselee.
Chatham	2111	46·1	Otway.
Hull	6498	16·5	Clay, Norwood.
Dover	2414	36·5	Freshfield, Dixon.
Hastings	1941	43·1	Waldegrave-Leslie, Robertson.
* Pembroke	1479	54·2	Sir J. Owen.
Cardiff	2123	37·4	Crichton-Stewart.
Sunderland	3468	17·5	Fenwick, Hartley.
Scarborough . . .	1446	41·2	Johnstone, Dent.
Average . .	...	37·5	
Manchester	22792	27·0	James, Bazley.
Birmingham	15497	19·2	Bright, Scholefield.
Nottingham	6921	39·4	Morley, Clifton.
Sheffield	9136	26·0	Roebuck, Hadfield.
Leicester	5438	39·9	Harris, Taylor.
Norwich	5682	33·0	Russell, Warner.
York	4724	34·4	Lowther, Leeman.
Oxford	3113	44·0	Neate, Cardwell.
Wolverhampton . . .	4891	25·8	Villiers, Weguelin.
Total Boroughs . . 32			Total Members . . 62.

* These are two of the 8 Boroughs (see next page) in which Working Men are a majority of the Electors.

TABLE.

Of the Eight Boroughs, returning Fourteen Members, in which, according to the latest returns, the Working Men have an actual majority, and whom they returned at the last General Election.

Taken from the "Electoral Statistics" for 1866, No. 170.

Parliamentary City or Borough.	Number of Electors on the Register, 1865-6.	Per centage of Working Men to Electors.	Members returned at the last General Election.
Coventry	4967	69·8	Eaton, H. W. (Conservative). Treherne, Morgan (Cons.).
Stafford	1540	57·7	Bass, M. Ar. (Liberal). Meller, W. (Conservative).
Maldon	859	55·8	Sandford, G. M. W. (Tory). Earle, R. A. (Conservative).
Newcastle-under-Lyne .	1077	54·7	Allen, W. S. (Liberal). Buckley, E. (Conservative).
Pembroke	1433	54·2	Owen, Sir Hugh (Liberal).
Beverley	1239	53·4	Edwards, H. (Conservative). Sykes, C. (Conservative).
Greenwich	9805	52·7	Salomons, Ald. (Liberal). Bright, Sir Charles (Liberal).
St. Ives	486	51·0	Paul, H. (Conservative).

Conservative Members	9
Liberal Members	5
Total	14

TABLE OF BOROUGHS, SHOWING THEIR POPULATION AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVES.

Eleven Boroughs with less than 5,000.

Number of Members.				Members.	Influence.
1	Arundel . . .	*l.*	2,498	Howard, Lord E.	Duke of Norfolk.
1	Ashburton . .	*l.*	3,062	Jardine	Lord Clinton.
1	Dartmouth . .	*c.*	4,444	Hardy	Seale of Mt. Boone.
2	Evesham . . .	*l. c.*	4,680	Bourne, Holland	LordNorthwick,Rudge
2	Honiton . . .	*l. c.*	3,301	Goldsmid, BaileyCochrane	Viscount Courtnay.
1	Lyme Regis . .	*c.*	3,215	Treby	Attwood.
2	Marlborough .	*l. c.*	4,893	Bruce, Baring	Ailesbury.
1	Northallerton .	*c.*	4,755	Mills	Harewood.
2	Thetford . . .	*c. c.*	4,208	Harvey, Baring	Grafton, Ashburton.
2	Totnes . . .	*l. l.*	4,001	Pender, Seymour	Cleveland, Somerset.
2	Wells	*l. c.*	4,648	Joliffe, Hayter	Dean and Chapter.
17	Total	8 *l.* 9 *c.*	43,705		

Nine Boroughs with over 200,000.

Number of Members.				Members.	Influence.
2	Birmingham . .	*l. l.*	296,076	Scholefield, Bright	
2	Finsbury . . .	*l. l.*	387,278	Torrens, Lusk	
2	Lambeth . . .	*l. l.*	294,883	Hughes, Doulton	
2	Leeds	*l. c.*	207,165	Beecroft, Baines	
2	Liverpool . . .	*c. c.*	443,938	Horsfall, Graves	
2	Manchester . .	*l. l.*	357,979	Bazley, James	
2	Marylebone . .	*l. l.*	436,252	Lewis, Chambers	
2	Tower Hamlets .	*l. l.*	647,845	Ayrton, Butler	
2	Westminster .	*l. l.*	254,623	Grosvenor, Mill	
18	Total	15 *l.* 3 *c.*	3,326,039		

TABLE OF BOROUGHS, SHOWING THEIR POPULATION AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVES—*continued.*

Ten Boroughs with less than 10,000.

Number of Members.				Members.	Influence.
2	Andover . . .	*l. c.*	5,430	Fortescue, Humph.	Fellowes, Pollen.
2	Bodmin . . .	*l. l.*	6,381	Gower, Wyld	
2	Bridgenorth . .	*l. c.*	7,699	Pritchard, Acton	Whitmore.
2	Bridport . . .	*l. l.*	7,719	Mitchell, Hodson	
2	Buckingham . .	*l. c.*	7,626	Verney, Hubbard	Buckingham.
2	Chichester . .	*l. c.*	8,059	Lennox, Abel Smith	Duke of Richmond.
2	Chippenham .	*c. c.*	7,075	Neeld, Gouldeney	Neeld.
2	Cirencester . .	*c. c.*	6,336	Bathurst, Dutton	Bathurst, Cripps.
2	Cockermouth .	*l. c.*	7,057	Steele, Naas	
2	Devizes . . .	*c. c.*	6,638	Bateson, D. Griffith	Sotheron Estcourt.
20	Total	9 *l.* 11 *c.*	70,020		

Ten Boroughs with more than 100,000.

Number of Members.				Members.	Influence.
2	Bradford . . .	*l. l.*	106,218	Wickham, Foster	
2	Bristol . . .	*l. l.*	154,093	Barclay, Peto	
2	Greenwich . .	*l. l.*	139,436	Salomons, Sir C. Bright	
4	London . . .	*l. l.* *l. l.*	112,063	Göschen, Crawford, Laurence, Rothschild	
2	Newcastle-on-T.	*l. l.*	109,108	Cowen, Headlam	
1	Salford . . .	*l.*	102,449	Cheetham	
2	Sheffield . . .	*l. l.*	185,172	Roebuck, Hadfield	
2	Stoke	*l. c.*	101,207	Hope, Grenfell	
2	Southwark . .	*l. l.*	193,593	Locke, Layard	
2	Wolverhampton.	*l. l.*	147,670	Villiers, Weguelin	
21	Total	20 *l.* 1 *c.*	1,351,009		

TABLE OF BOROUGHS, SHOWING THEIR POPULATION AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVES—*continued.*

Sixteen Boroughs with less than 10,000.

Number of Members.				Members.	Influence.
2	Dorchester . .	*l. c.*	6,823	Sturt, Sheridan	Shaftesbury, Williams.
2	Harwich . . .	*c. c.*	5,070	Jervis, Kelk	Attwood.
2	Huntingdon . .	*c. c.*	6,254	Peel, Baring	Sandwich.
2	Knaresborough .	*l. c.*	5,402	Woodd, Holden	Devonshire, Slingsby.
2	Lewes	*l. l.*	9,716	Brand, Pelham	
2	Lichfield . . .	*l. c.*	6,893	Anson, Dyott	Sutherland, Anglesea.
2	Ludlow . . .	*c. c.*	6,033	Clive, Severne	Powis.
2	Lymington . .	*l. c.*	5,179	Mackinnon, Lennox	Burrard.
2	Maldon . . .	*c. c.*	6,261	Peacock, Earle	Strutt.
2	Malton . . .	*l. l.*	8,072	Fitzwilliam, Browne	Fitzwilliam.
2	Hertford . . .	*l. c.*	6,769	Cowper, Farquhar	Salisbury, Cowper.
2	Leominster . .	*c. c.*	5,686	Walsh, Hardy	Arkwright.
2	Marlow . . .	*c. c.*	6,496	Williams, Knox	Peers Williams, Clayton
2	Newport . . .	*l. c.*	7,934	Martin, Kennard	
2	Poole	*l. l.*	9,759	Seymour, Waring	De Mauley, Guest.
2	Richmond . .	*l. l.*	5,134	Palmer, Dundas	Zetland.
32	Total	14 *l.* 18 *c.*	107,481		

Sixteen Boroughs with more than 50,000, *and less than* 100,000.

Number of Members.				Members.	Influence.
2	Bath	*l. c.*	52,528	Tite, Hogg	
1	Birkenhead . .	*c.*	51,649	Laird	
2	Blackburn . .	*c. c.*	63,126	Hornby, Feilden	
2	Bolton . . .	*l. c.*	70,395	Gray, Barnes	
2	Brighton . . .	*l. l.*	87,317	White, Fawcett	
2	Devonport . .	*c. c.*	64,783	Flemming, Ferrand	
2	Hull	*l. l.*	97,661	Clay, Norwood	
2	Leicester . . .	*l. l.*	68,056	Harris, Taylor	
2	Norwich . . .	*l. l.*	74,891	Russell, Warner	
2	Nottingham . .	*l. l.*	74,693	Morley, Clifton	
2	Oldham . . .	*l. l.*	94,344	Hibbert, Platt	
2	Plymouth . .	*l. l.*	62,599	Collier, Morrison	
2	Portsmouth . .	*l. l.*	94,799	Stone, Gaselee	
2	Preston . . .	*c. c.*	82,985	Hesketh, Stanley	
2	Stockport . .	*l. l.*	54,681	Watkin, Smith	
2	Sunderland . .	*l. c.*	85,797	Fenwick, Hartley	
31	Total	21 *l.* 10 *c.*	1,180,304		

FLOGGING BILL.* March 10, 1864.

General Summary.

Total Members who voted, 90		Electoral Weight, 261,428	
For	46	Against	175,984
Against . . .	44	For	85,444
Majority For .	2	Majority Against .	90,540

DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER BILL. March 2, 1866.

General Summary.

Total Members who voted, 332		Electoral Weight, 657,448	
For Second Reading	156	For	362,733
Against	176	Against . . .	294,715
Majority Against .	20	Majority For .	68,018

Analysis of Ayes and Noes.

SUMMARY.

	Ayes.	Noes.
County Members	47	84
Borough Members with less than 1,000 Electors .	46	48
Borough Members with more than 1,000 Electors .	63	38
University Members	0	6
Total	156	176

* This table is taken from Acland's "Imperial Poll Book."

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